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THE Journal for all interested in
Country Life and Country Pursuits.

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

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CHANGES IN ... AGRICULTURE.

THOUGHTS of a very mixed kind must be awakened in the minds of that necessarily diminishing fraction of visitors to the show at Gloucester who were present when the previous one was held there in 1853. There are, indeed, only a few left in Great Britain who could discourse to purpose on the vast revolution that has taken place in husbandry during that time. In 1853, how simple, for instance, was the machinery! The hay which is now being cut by horse-drawn hay-cutters—and probably in the course of a few years will be laid low by motors—was then entirely mowed by hand. The man with the scythe would have been very much astonished if he had been told that before the "Royal" held another show in Gloucester his calling would be growing obsolete. He used to be what Chaucer would have called a "stout carle," with a back that nothing could tire. Richard Jefferies somewhere has given us a word-picture of the man who would get up at four o'clock in the morning and keep on mowing with an endless swish, swish, until dusk began to fall. His intervals for meals were very slight, but the quantities of beer he consumed were enormous. The corn was similarly cut down with sickles, and the farmer was hard put to it to find hands that would get through the work with sufficient rapidity. Luckily, great bands of Irishmen used to come over and hire themselves out for a month's harvesting. To-day the work that fell to this army is performed by one or two mechanics driving a machine. Yet the improvement is not so vast in reality as it looks. The present writer was talking only the other day to a middle-aged farmer who has the account books of his father and grandfather, who tilled the same acres that he farms to-day, and he says the expense of husbandry is just as great at the present moment as in those old times, and that, stranger still, it is no more quickly done. The custom was to hire men for four weeks, and if the season were a fair average one this time was sufficient to enable the corn to be reaped, dried

and stacked. During the last few years, with all the scientific resources at our disposal, the harvest has lasted at least as long; most likely it will continue to do so, because in a climate such as ours the crops do not ripen at a uniform pace, and the length of the process of drying is determined by the amount of moisture that falls. The real and most important change is in the number of hands that we employ.

In an older England it is certain that the country was more thickly inhabited than it is to-day. At the present moment the ploughshare passes regularly over villages that were standing in the middle of last century, and whoever has conversed with old inhabitants during the years between, say, 1860 and 1885 or 1890, must have heard how, in their operations, they have frequently laid bare the foundations of houses and the remains of whole villages that have passed utterly out of existence. To say that these places have no records may be true, but it does not justify scepticism. It would be easily possible to point to an exceptionally beautiful avenue that starts from one of the main roads going North and apparently ends at an open field. For years people who did not give the matter much thought conjectured that it was an avenue leading to a comparatively modern hall that is standing now. A moment's thought would have shown that this could not be the case, because the avenue goes straight past this structure. It was only through the owner of the land causing a pit to be dug for purposes of his own that the discovery was made of the foundations of the walls of what must have been a great house. Yet, although books, ancient and modern, have been searched, there is, so far as we can learn, no record whatever of that mansion. Such cases are probably very frequent throughout England. As a child the present writer lived in a small house by the side of a river. It was eventually pulled down and merged in the agricultural land. The younger generation can scarcely be convinced that such a dwelling ever existed; no record of it is left except in the minds of a few people who are growing older year by year. So it must have been with that curious England of which we get glimpses from the impressions left by travellers on the stage-coaches. They tell us of multitudes of little thatched houses which evidently had small farms belonging to them, and were lived in by a sordid and uncouth race of men who tilled their garth, and perhaps rooted up a bit of common and at the end earned an epitaph such as is to be found on a tombstone in the North: "Good times, bad times and all times got over." We sometimes talk of England being "Merry England" in those days; but it was an England of hard manual labour and unceasing care, of one-roomed houses, whose inhabitants were scantily clad and ill-fed.

The contrasting picture is easy to draw because it is before our eyes. There may still be hovels in rural England, but there are not so many as there were in the days when Bishop Fraser of Manchester and Charles Kingsley and Maurice made an agitation against them. There are fewer men in the country, but those fewer men are much more comfortable. It is not only that the amount of their wages has increased, but so has the buying power. When wheat frequently went up to 60s. a quarter, and wages often went down as low as 6s., it is very certain that the little ones were often compelled to go in want of bread. Human ingenuity has been taxed to invent machines that practically do away with hard labour. Objects that had to be carried on the backs of men and women are now raised by mechanical means and carried by motive power. What a laborious task it was to make a haystack in the olden time. The mowers had to mow the grass, the women and young men and children came to ted it. They again heaped it together into mounds that go by different names in different parts of the country. Finally, it was led to where it was to be stacked, and flung on to the rick by Herculean young men armed with forks. On the rick it was received usually by one or two stout young women, who put it where the sackers directed. To-day all this is done by machinery. The disadvantage lies in this—that the great and numerous peasantry has now been reduced to such small dimensions that it is no longer able to furnish that reserve of strong and healthy young men and women of which a commercial country is always in need.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Miss Rosamund Grosvenor. Miss Grosvenor is the daughter of the late Hon. Algernon Grosvenor, and her mother is a daughter of Sir John Simeon.

* * It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens, or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.

COUNTRY NOTES



ON Monday last the King and Queen were present at the jubilee of the opening of Wellington College, and the King, in a highly interesting speech, let his memory go back to the year 1857, "when Queen Victoria and my father arrived at an open space, and laid the foundation-stone of this great College." Three years after that it was opened by Queen Victoria. The school since then has had a brilliant career. As His Majesty very truly said, the first master of Wellington was a great man, and he had an able follower in Mr. Wickham, Mr. Gladstone's son-in-law. Of the present head-master, Dr. Pollock, the King said, "He has proved a most excellent and most efficient Master of Wellington College, and I only trust that his great qualities may for a long time not give him promotion in the Church." It was a speech worthy of the occasion, and not without a touch of pathos. His Majesty said it seemed to him as if that foundation ceremony had taken place only yesterday, though, in reality, it is half a century ago.

Inclement weather on the opening day handicapped the show of the Royal Agricultural Society at Gloucester, rain and thunder-storms coming on while the judging was in progress. Otherwise it is one of the most remarkable collections of animals and implements connected with agriculture that has ever been brought together in this or any other country. There is no side of husbandry which is not fully and thoroughly represented: horses, cattle, sheep, pigs and the small livestock of the farm, implements of the newest and most ingenious type, seeds and manures which have been brought to perfection by the most eminent men of science of the time—all these can be studied to an extent never possible before. We cannot as yet form an opinion of the financial success of the show. There was a natural falling off in attendance as compared with that at the three preceding exhibitions; but that was, no doubt, in great part due to the rain on the first day, and as we write it still remains to be seen if the show does not, as much as it deserves to do, bring in a return which will compare favourably with any earned since its itinerant character was resumed. An interesting feature, to which we shall have occasion to refer at more length, was the exhibition of mechanical devices for spraying fruit trees either by hand or by motor power.

We can only glance slightly at the prize-list to-day, as it is published just as we are going to press. Shorthorn cattle form generally a great attraction at this show, and the number exceeded that of this breed or any other breed ever brought together at a summer meeting in Great Britain. The championship for the best shorthorn bull was carried off by Mr. Maden's Duke of Hoole, and the Duke of Northumberland was reserve. Lord Sherborne was awarded the championship for the best shorthorn cow, and Messrs. R. W. Hobbs and Sons produced the best dairy shorthorn cow. Of equal interest with the cattle are the Shire horses, and here the championships were won by representatives of the most famous studs. The Duke of Devonshire in Holker Mars supplied the champion stallion, and Lord Rothschild the best mare, Desford Future Queen. Other breeds were well represented, the Channel Islands cattle and the Irish cattle being shown in very large numbers. The King was an exhibitor on

an extensive scale, but did not carry off so many prizes as usual. He obtained first for a Dexter cow in milk with Compton Daphne, third prizes for a shorthorn bull and a Hereford heifer, and a fifth prize for a yearling shorthorn heifer. Southdown ewe lambs from Sandringham secured the first and second prizes, and the King also was awarded the first prize for shearling Southdown ewes and a third for a pen of three Southdown lambs.

In the course of the summer or early autumn the inhabitants of this country will probably have an opportunity of witnessing an important trial of an airship. It is now being built in Paris, and is described by the hon. secretary of the Parliamentary Aerial Defence Committee as having a capacity of 227,500 cubic feet. It is fitted with two propellers and driven by two motors of about 220 horse-power. It will carry twenty-five passengers, and the speed will be between thirty-five and forty miles an hour. It can ascend over 6,000ft., and is designed to carry supplies and petrol for nearly 700 miles. The difficulty experienced at the moment is that there is not in England a garage capable of taking it in; but this ought not to be an insuperable obstacle. Evidently the dirigible represents the latest achievement in aeronautics, and the country will be disappointed indeed if the experiment be not carried out as promptly and efficiently as possible.

A SWEET DAY.

What bard could let so sweet a day
Go unrecorded by?
So green the land, the air so warm;
And this bright sky
Full of white clouds—and yet not one
To pass between me and the Sun.

Bluebells, Primroses, Cuckoo-flowers
Do swarm before my eyes,
In dingles paved with leaves of green;
And Butterflies
Play on the wing, and in the air
Find holes and vanish! How I stare!

And lo! the Skylark sings a song—
While fluttering at the Sun—
That seems a rattling chorus of
More birds than one!
O that I had ten thousand days
Like this to live and spend in praise!

WILLIAM H. DAVIES.

Dr. Jamieson Boyd Hurry has presented to the Corporation of Reading a memorial of Henry Beaulerc, which was unveiled last Saturday by Mr. Augustine Birrell. It may seem to be a belated gift. Henry Beaulerc, the fourth son of William the Conqueror, and the only one born on English ground, was buried with great pomp and circumstance in Reading Abbey on January 4th, 1136, when King Stephen, the Archbishop, the bishops and nobles of the realm were present in their appropriate robes. To his memory a splendid effigy was erected, and by the side of it was one to his queen, Adeliza. How much prized these memorials would have been if permitted to survive until to-day! Unfortunately, the royal tomb was rifled and destroyed four centuries later. Still, there is good cause why Reading should do honour to the memory of Henry. He founded the great religious institution which made the town what it was, and that the arts were cultivated there would be shown, if by nothing else, by what has been left to us of the compositions of the Monk of Reading. He is generally credited with the authorship of the beautiful "Sumer is icumen in," and probably he and his fellow-monks used it as a part song when going about their several duties in the monastery. Evidently Reading attracted men of enlightenment during many centuries, and her citizens have a good excuse for doing some honour, even at this late hour, to the greatest magnate ever connected with the town.

Very pretty is the request from the club officials in Germany as to the treatment of the party of German boys who are to come over here on July 6th for a thirty-four days' tour. They are members of a rambling club, the Wandervogel, and will wear in this country a costume of Norfolk jackets, knickers, green caps and the distinctive cord badge of the club. The Germans particularly request that the tour through the country should be conducted in a modest and simple fashion. They say, "It is our endeavour here in Germany, to show men brought up in luxurious habits, how it is just by this method of touring that a man feels himself at his best and happiest"; so what they request is that in towns a modest night's lodging in beds be provided, but in the country plenty of straw and hay. It is proposed that the ramblers should walk about 400 miles during their visit, going through Edinburgh to

Stirling, and thence by train to the Lake District, and, after walking through Cumberland and Westmorland, go through Yorkshire. It is greatly to be desired that those who are responsible for their entertainment in this country should take the Germans at their word, and let the boys carry out their idea of a simple walking holiday, with plenty of plain food and honest rest in the open air.

At a time when so many people are travelling, attention should be directed to a judgment by the First Division of the Court of Session a few days ago. The case which gave rise to it was one in which a traveller sued the company for the value of a packing-case which contained clothes worth about £80. The traveller was non-suited, on the ground that the railway company has printed on the back of its "left luggage" tickets a condition that they will not be responsible for packages which are above £5 in value, unless this value is declared and an additional charge paid for extra care. The traveller did not read this condition, but he was able to prove that his packing-case was one of three and that it had been left on the platform, where probably it was stolen and never warehoused by the railway company at all. Now it may, or may not, be right that the traveller should suffer for not declaring the value of his case, and so ensuring extra care being taken; but, on the other hand, the railway company were surely responsible for taking some care of the case, else why do they exact a fee? The negligence shown in leaving a valuable packing case on the railway station platform ought, one would think, to have made them liable for some part of the loss. At any rate, passengers by train ought to take warning that, when they are leaving bags or parcels with valuable contents, it is quite worth while to declare them above £5 and to pay a little extra, as, according to this reading of the law, unless this is done, the railway company escapes responsibility for these parcels altogether.

Among the railway companies the Great Eastern has long held an honourable place for the liberality of its views and its enterprise. These qualities have been shown once more in the resolution to meet the growing competition of other means of locomotion by increasing the number of trains and lowering the fares. After all, most people still prefer a railway train in which to make even a short journey, provided that it is as rapid and as inexpensive as going on the outside or inside of an omnibus or tramcar, and when opposition comes it is of very little use to do as some of the companies have done—that is, to increase the fares without adding to the facilities for travel. Their first business is to attract passengers, and if they cannot achieve that, it is obvious that they are on the road to absolute failure. We think, then, that the Great Eastern is following a very sound policy—a policy that derives an additional recommendation from the fact that the company serves the poorest districts and the poorest suburbs in London. All that Walthamstow is and all that Walthamstow represents is typical of the human traffic on the Great Eastern lines. It is one of many vast congeries of workmen's dwellings, which is only another way of saying that cheapness is the appeal which will receive the quickest attention.

In the House of Commons there is a considerable difference of opinion in regard to the Bill to prevent imitation of butter by colouring margarine. Mr. Byles ingeniously argued that, just as it would be a hardship to prevent a lady, unable to afford a silk dress, from buying one of mercerised cotton, which looks almost the same, so it would be unfair to emphasise the difference between margarine and butter. But the fact that we are in this case dealing with an article of food makes all the difference in the world. At the same time, it is beginning at the wrong end to attack the use of colouring matter in margarine. Neither in butter nor in butter substitutes ought colouring matter to be allowed at all. It serves no purpose from a dietetic point of view: it does not do positive harm, at any rate, nobody urges that it does any good to the butter, and colour is constantly used as a cloak for adulteration. There is no article of food that is more systematically adulterated than butter, as was proved only the other day in the samples taken of alleged Irish produce. It is very evident that the Foods and Drugs Adulteration Bill is either a very ineffectual measure or it is ineffectually administered, and the legalised use of colouring matter in butter adds immensely to the difficulty of getting even an approximately pure article on the market.

A disease among bees, which is said to be identical with what is called the Isle of Wight Bee Disease, has broken out in some hives in Buckinghamshire, and the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries desires it to be known that any who find this disease among their bees are recommended to consult the Board, free of charge, on the matter. The Board has already published

a full account by which the disease, when inspected, may be recognised. It is a remarkable thing that the bacillus of this curious and fatal sickness in the bees bears a wonderfully strong resemblance to the plague bacillus; but there is no reason, on that account, to suppose that the bees can infect human beings with the germs of plague. The outbreak in Buckinghamshire is the more singular because the scene is so remote from that which we have come to look upon as the home and nursery of these particular microbes, and it does not seem possible to find the connecting stages by which it has been conveyed.

Pageantry this week has its home at Colchester, and it is not surprising to learn that oysters and roses figure very largely in it. The spectacle is a very beautiful one, although one cannot help being struck with the fact that the same characters are bound to figure in the early scenes of every English pageant. "The British Warrior Queen," Boadicea, familiar in our childhood, owing chiefly to Cowper's poem, had recently, like Kosciusko, faded a little out of the public memory; but she and her wild horses have come back in great form at the various pageants. The Emperor Claudius, too, has apparently had a large share in making the local history of Great Britain, while the Plantagenet and Lancastrian kings and queens, Queen Elizabeth and Catharine of Aragon, are all figures common to every pageant. Still, these finely contrived exhibitions teach history in a living way that is quite different from mere book-learning. To give young people even a rough idea of the generations that have gone before us, of great men and women who have borne a part in building up the Empire, is a useful and worthy task. We only hope that the public will not tire too quickly of this kind of amusement.

WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

(June nig't.)

The sea gulls wheel aloft and sink,
Slide swiftly circlewise and fade
To where the West is olive-pink
And rosy mists the river shade.

And sullen, purposeful and strange
The silent stream glides on, beneath
The patient bridge that will not change,
And all the city holds its breath.

Then gazing towards the sunken sun
A pale girl eyes his lingering gleam,
A soul whose little day is done,
For whom will come no night, no dream.

DOUGLAS GOLDRING.

Prosecutions under the Wild Birds' Protection Act are much less numerous than ought to be the case, and it is almost to be regretted that the magistrates at Llandudno the other day let two offenders off with a reprimand. They had taken a nest of ravens from Great Orme's Head, and their only plea was that they were ignorant of the law and did not know it was an offence to do so. The raven is becoming very scarce indeed throughout Great Britain, and there are only one or two places in the country where nests can be found. Great Orme's Head is one of them, and the colony there has been watched with very great care by the local naturalists. The two people who were brought up are residents at Great Orme's Head, and it is possible, though not very probable, that they did not know the value of the birds. It is true that they replaced them on the instruction of the officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; but whether the birds would survive or not would depend upon their age, which is not given in the report of the trial.

Evidently there is to be no runaway victory for any team in the County Cricket Championship this year. On Monday, the only undefeated county was Middlesex, but it had only played seven matches as compared with thirteen of Yorkshire and twelve of Surrey. As we write, the team is in a fair way to lose the distinction it possessed. Kent, which has shown so much brilliance at various times, has had one bad week that has reduced it from a leading place. Surrey and Lancashire have also undergone defeat; the champions themselves have had on two occasions to succumb, so that now, when we are in the middle of the cricket season, it remains absolutely impossible to say that the ultimate victory of one county is more likely than that of another. Yorkshire, which began rather badly, has recently given evidence of a reserve of strength in several young players, and the rally made by the team in the first of their matches with the Australian cricketers showed that they are still to be reckoned with. Opinion about the Australians continues to be of a conflicting nature. Their victory in the second Test Match seemed to be due more to the bad selection of the English team than to their own merits. Their career in the counties has been a chequered one.

THE SOUTHPORT SANDHILLS.



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GRASS AND SAND FIGHTING FOR POSSESSION.

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HE who goes to Southport goes to the region of sandhills, as the ancient name, "North Meols," implies. Southport itself, both as a name and a place, is comparatively modern, but the "Meols" are ancient enough, for long before Jameson sang, in 1636, it might have been said:

Ye guise
Of those chaffe sands which doe in mountain rise
On shore 'tis pleasure to behold, which Hoos
Are called in Worold; windie tempest blows
Them up in heapes.

The above derivation will scarcely be questioned now, though wild excursions have been taken into the realm of fanciful etymology in the past. One imagined that "Meols" came from the "meally" appearance of the sand; and it has even been suggested that the term was derived from two Greek words, together meaning "not sea," or "no longer sea." The shore at Southport is a source of delight to the lover of space and colour, the play of the light on this almost unique surface is fascinating. The sand assumes many shades and charming half-tones, according to its different degrees of dryness and the impingement of ever-altering light upon it, and numerous streams, creeks and pools break the contour with

sinuous lines and silvery relief. The sky, too, with nothing to break the horizon-line but the distant sea, is a wonderful study, and as the setting sun nears its "dip," the slanting rays are shot between masses of cloud and at obtuse angles along the shore, bringing out light and shade and tone and semi-tone in distracting beauty. A walk along the sands at low tide in the evening light is a revelation of spacious and quiet loveliness. Those who have once felt the spell of this shore will need no other lure than that of their own fascination to

Come unto these yellow sands,

as often as may be.

The sandhills are but seldom visited save by those who know their secret, and by the devotees of golf. The going is too hard for the ordinary pedestrian, and they are voted monotonous by

those who do not look beneath the surface. That surface is ever-changing in its form and is never ten minutes the same in high-lights and shadows; every wind gives new shapes, and every passing cloud alters the appearance, while the direction and altitude of the sun (when the sky is clear) produce a series of constantly changing effects.

The dunes are an object-lesson in blown sand. Scarcely anywhere else around the English Coast are circumstances as favourable for this study as here and further south along the same shore. Owing to the



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THE WIND'S MASON-WORK.

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"LONG PATHWAYS KNOWN TO THE EXPLOSIVE TIDE
WHICH PARTING LEAVES ITS FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND."

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western aspect of the line of hills, the drift matter, etc., of the Gulf Stream, and other influences (not overlooking the geological formation of the inland country and the banks of the streams coming down therefrom), the very composition of the sand itself has its peculiarities. An hour here with a pocket-microscope is an hour of enlightenment. A handful of sand from these dunes

and a handful from the Lincolnshire Coast, say, carefully examined, compared and contrasted, will be found to be both alike and different; and if the student goes a little inland and examines the blown sand which overlies the peat—with its lower deposit of fresh-water and its upper deposit of marine shells—he will learn a suggestive lesson in the genesis of the blown sand



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"SANDS WHICH DOE IN MOUNTAINS RISE."

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"WHERE THE STORM WARRIORS OF THE SEA HAVE SWEEPED."

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HOLLOWED BY THE WIND.

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deposit along this coast, the conditions under which it settled, the purifying influence of the marine sand upon the semi-stagnant fresh water into which it was carried, the further consequent influence on the vegetable growth of the district, and a great many things beside.

Among the dunes themselves and along the shore near at hand one may find the materials and forces which have produced the sandhills as they are now—after a process extending, it is estimated, over a period of 2,500 years. The coast is low and flat, and the tide recedes a great distance, only at intervals approaching near to the base of the line of dunes. The flat expanse of sand, rarely wholly covered, dries on the surface and the particles are blown along in clouds; between the tides, too, the exposed surface rapidly dries. To walk along the shore in a high wind is to have one's clothes filled

with sand, and it is a curious sight to look down from the Southport Pier on to the drifting clouds of sand being hurried along below. If the stroller along the shore be observant he may see the initial stage of many a sandhill at his feet. Where a fragment of shell or other small obstruction has become fixed a few particles of the blown sand come to a stop against it on the windward side; more and more particles are brought up by the obstruction, and other particles which have surmounted it come to rest "out of the wind," forming a slanting "tail" on the leeward side. Here is a miniature dune, as perfect in its formation and varying slopes as the giants of its kind; an illustration of the way in which the mighty heaps of sand along the coast (some of them rising to a height of over 80ft. above mean sea-level) began to be. On the exposed shore these baby sandhills are swept away by the next tide; but they illustrate the



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NATURE'S FURROWS.

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genesis of the dunes. When the blown sand reaches a point above tide-level it is no longer subject to such interference as that which demolishes the tiny heap on the shore, and so the dunes are constantly being added to.

The botany of the sandhills is full of interest. Two growths will strike the visitor at once, the first in order of beauty being the dwarf willow (*Salix repens*). This is beautiful at all seasons, whether in the catkin stage, in the summer, or when the cottony-looking seed is being discharged and the dunes appear as if covered with snow. Lotze, the famous Dutch botanist, was much impressed by this growth, saying he had never seen the like. Not that this willow is uncommon, but it grows in such unusual profusion here. It has a curious parasite, the "yellow bird's-nest"—a name which accurately describes its "all-gold" appearance. The other plant which cannot be overlooked by the most casual visitor is the marram grass (*Starr grass*). The hills owe the greater part of such stability as they possess to this growth. Its value has long been recognised, for in the reign of Elizabeth an Act was passed making the cutting of this grass an indictable crime. The Act is still in force, but may sometimes be more honoured in the breach than in the observance, for a judicious cutting of the tops strengthens the roots to such an extent that they will extend for 18ft. or 20ft. in a lateral direction through the sand. The "binding" effect of this grass is seen in the resistance offered to the influence of wind where it grows. It is often planted in places where the drift of sand is too rapid, and never fails to ensure stability. Of course, other growths, such as that of the sea calystegia, for example, aid in the binding process. Some idea of the value of such growths, especially of the marram, may be gathered from the drift where they are absent or scarce. Not far from the dunes illustrated in this article is a farm, the buildings of which have been completely buried by blown sand. It is known as "Lost Farm."

There is plenty of wild life on the dunes. There are many varieties of birds, some common, others rare. Many are only visitants for a brief period, others breed among the dunes and slacks. Kestrels and other hawks are common, the merlin finding the many larks to his taste. The great butcher-bird hunts the lizards among the dunes, and the red-backed shrike finds an amply-supplied larder; wheatears abound and scores of varieties of birds are to be met with. Of animals there are a few—rabbits galore (consequently, weasels, polecats, etc.)—with other frequenters of sandy soils. Shrews do not seem to thrive, though they are numerous, for it has been observed that they are often found dead among the dunes. Green and brown lizards are common, and their pretty ways well worth watching. From the lower localities the fuller voice of the natterjack mingles with and half drowns the less-insistent croaking of the ordinary frog. Enormous specimens of the commoner toad bury themselves in the sand or lazily flop along.

Whether one has regard to the materials, formation, constant modifications, flora, fauna, or what not of the dunes, they are full of absorbing interest, which many visits will not exhaust. It may be mentioned that they constitute about the best point of outlook also. From the higher dunes on a clear day the view is broad and beautiful, extending to the Cumberland and Westmorland mountains in the north and north-east and to the Snowdon group in the opposite direction, while under exceptional atmospheric conditions the Isle of Man may be discerned. One word of entreaty to visitors may not be amiss: the rarer growths on the dunes are to be respected, and specimens should be gathered sparingly. To carry away all the flowers of any kind that can be found is sheer vandalism and unfair to other botanists and to all who love to see a plant flourishing in its native situation. The wholesale depredations of some who ought to know better render this protest not unnecessary. In point of fact, the dunes described are situated at Birkdale, which is a separate borough; but it is sufficiently accurate for all practical purposes, and more comprehensible to readers in general, to call them the Southport sandhills.

THE TRAMP.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

BIRD NOTES AND THE WEATHER.

COMING suddenly out into the Fen the other day I understood better than ever before how it is that good observers can honestly believe that they have heard a snipe drumming when not on the wing, wherefrom it would follow that the bird drums with its mouth. On all sides of me, as I unexpectedly emerged into view, the snipe rose and in a minute the air was resonant with the strong thrumming note, which the natives here call "dithering." It was as if I was surrounded by a flock of sheep. The atmosphere seemed to be full of birds, but not one could I see for a full minute or more, till at last my eye caught one swinging against the sky, then, on the other side, another, and then a third and fourth. But this bit of fen is ringed about with woods and the day was dull, and so long as the birds kept against the dark background of foliage it was almost impossible for the eye to pick them up. Only as they flung themselves in wider circles and rose against the light skyline did they become visible.

THE CONFUSING SNIPE.

The ventriloquial quality of the note has often been noticed. It seems to re-echo from the face of the woods and from the ground on every side. Often it is only because the sound obviously coincides with the downward swoop of the whirling bird that one has to believe, against one's senses, that it is that particular snipe which makes the noise, so little does it seem to come from the exact point where you see the bird. It is very easy for a man to conclude that the noise comes from a bird which he sees at rest, when in truth it is made by another, but invisible, one somewhere in the background. I have spent many hours, one year with another, watching the snipe and listening to them drumming, and I confess myself in one detail still a heretic in the matter of the noise. I cannot bring myself to believe that the wings have nothing to do with it. Yes; I have made the experiment with the tail-feathers fastened in a bit of wood swung at the end of a string, and certainly the sound is exactly reproduced. But I earnestly believe that the primary quills make a noise also. Through glasses one sees how plainly those quills vibrate in unison with the rhythm of the beat. I recognise that on the one hand we have all the explanation that we need in the outspread tail-feathers; but I cannot believe that those wing-feathers vibrate so for nothing. Until somehow—and it is hard to say how it can be—it is proved that the wing-feathers make no noise, I shall go on heretically clinging to the conviction that, however much the tail may be vocal, the wings talk too.

A MOTHER'S INSTRUCTIONS.

Ten minutes before I intruded on the snipe I had watched a pretty exhibition of the way in which the mother peewit warns her young when danger threatens. We know—or, rather, we believe—that nearly all mother birds do the same. The safety of young birds whose flight is feeble rests chiefly in their sitting motionless and so escaping observation; and when you stand and look at a podgy little thrush which sits as if it were made of mud and blinks back at you, that reiterated cry of the fluttered mother bird is undoubtedly an injunction to the youngster to go on doing nothing but sitting still. We all accept this as a fact; but the opportunity does not so often offer of seeing things which prove it to be true.

OBEDIENT PEWIT CHICKS.

I had bicycled out to the Fen, and at one point on the high road, some 30yds. inside a field, a mother plover was feeding with two young chicks among the springing wheat, which, barely breast-high to the old bird, hid all but the heads of the little folk. They were independent children, roaming at large some yards away from their parent. As I dismounted, the old bird stood still and watched me, while the young ones went on moving unconcernedly until the mother, becoming alarmed at my motionlessness, began to call—"pee—ee—oo! pee—ee—oo!" and at the second call both young ones disappeared into the springing wheat and squatted tight to the ground. As long as I remained the old plover kept up her warning cry—"pee—ee—oo!"—once every two seconds or so, as regularly as the ticking of a clock. I started to move on again, wheeling my bicycle; and as soon as I resumed my way, the mother's fears subsided and she stopped calling. The interval of two calls had barely passed when up bobbed two little heads and the young ones began to run about in entire security. Again I stood still and again the mother called. Immediately the two little ones crouched once more. That it was not my presence or my movements which influenced the chicks was evident; it was the mother's call which commanded their obedience.

ELM-SEEDING EXTRAORDINARY.

I presume that all parts of the country have suffered alike from what it is impossible not to call the plague of the elm seeds this year. Never has there been known anything like it in this county of Cambridgeshire so far as man's memory can recall. When, in April, the elms broke into blossom they appeared almost as densely clad in verdure, though of a different shade, as if they had their summer leafage, and when, in early May, the seed began to scatter itself, the air, in even the lightest breeze, was as dense with Nature's confetti as if it snowed heavily. Every lawn which has elms near it was, for fully three weeks of May and into the beginning of June, covered with a pale yellowish carpet, which it was useless to sweep away, because it fell faster than it could be swept. In elm-bordered roads the stuff drifted literally several inches deep, as deep as ever dead leaves drift in autumn, so that people have used them to stuff pillows and cushions. The hedges have been as white as motor dust could make them; and if ever elms do grow from seed in England in the open, they surely will have a chance to do so this year. Happily, it is very uncertain if they ever do.

ANNUS MIRABILIS.

But it is not the elms only which are flowering and fruiting in extraordinary profusion. All flowering trees—laburnum, chestnut (both white and pink), lilac, hawthorn, guelder rose, as well as apple and pear trees—have been loaded with blossom in a way that has never been known before. Something was evidently favourable to the blossoming and fruiting of trees immensely beyond the measure of ordinary years.

LIGHTNING AND THE BLUE TIT.

We had a heavy thunder-storm here on May 26th, in which two great elms in unpleasantly close proximity to a farmhouse, and not 300yds. from where this is written, were struck by lightning. The fluid played queer tricks with the trees, scratching them as with the claws of some gigantic cat, splitting minor branches as if in spite at finding the huge trunks too big for it, and stripping off slithers of bark and throwing them long distances away. One of the trees had lost a branch, 5ft. from the ground, some years ago and the hole had been stopped with a block of cement, a solid lump of about the size and shape of a soup tureen. In mere playfulness the lightning picked the ponderous mass out of the hole to which it belonged and flung it on the ground several yards away; and we can see now that the block did not fit closely into its socket. There must have been a crevice on the right-hand lower side, for there, well inside the hole, now pitilessly exposed to the sunlight, is a blue tit dead upon its nest. It is absurd that the lightning, which wrenched and wracked the sturdy trees and heaved a hundredweight of solid cement clear into the air, should have left the little handful of flesh and feathers just where it was, unscathed; and beneath the sitting bird are three small eggs unbroken. It seems small business for lightning to go about killing sitting blue tits.

H. P. R.

*F. M. Sutcliffe.*

SEAFARERS.

Copyright.



TALES OF COUNTRY LIFE.



THE NEW RÉGIME. BY OLIVE GARNETT.

WHAT you, one of the *cognoscenti*, write of the perfections of Rawdon Hall interests me very much, and, *à propos*, I can

tell you an anecdote. Have I ever visited there? Of course I have, many times. Janie Curwen was a school-fellow of mine; we always kept in touch; and not long after her splendid marriage she invited me to her new home to stay "as long as you can bear it." I wondered what the particular it might be, for she was, even at school, a creature of nerves, or, rather, why not say straight out, an artist who might have . . . but doubtless Providence knows best. Still, if you ever get the chance, induce her to show you her silver points; they're worth seeing. Well, the first time I went there a very smart waggonette was sent to fetch me and my traps, and, on and off, as we drove up from the station a flag on the top of a tower kept on emerging from "a rising eminence embosomed in trees," as our forbears had it. The coachman owned to this as our goal with pride; but I must say I was not prepared for four towers flanking a tremendous modern pile—no, not four flags. But you know the place. A little figure in grey-green clinging stuff rose up from under a blossoming Persian plum tree by the *perron* as we swept round to it in grand style.

"You have got a castle, Janie!" I exclaimed, greetings over. "But I don't understand. Why Hall? Why not Rawdon Towers, at least?"

"Oh, there *was* an old house here once, but it was pulled down to make way for this. Isn't it dreadful?"

"Dreadful! Magnificent!" I laughed, but she never budged an inch from this attitude of hers the whole time I was there, and you know what dear little Janie can be with an *idée fixe*! It seems that she had taken a dislike to the place the very first moment she saw it—before she saw it for that matter, for she wrote to me on her engagement that she was going to live in big, bare Yorkshire, and supposed that she should lose all her friends. She had once told me dreamily that she should like to "wander about all her life in a meadow of irises." She was then certainly not unlike what one might figure as the spirit of an iris; and I reminded her of this and of other impossible flights of fancy; but at all my sallies she only shook her head mournfully in inextinguishable woe. She seemed to me now, indeed, like a fragile flower almost snapped off in some terrible gale; but she had not lost any of her charm for all that, and to whatever spot she sadly betook herself from it she seemed to absorb all the light and life. She *was* life. I could see that Mr. Curwen thought so too. He idolised her, that was evident; and she, how almost infantine and how graceful she appeared at the side of that sturdy Yorkshireman!

"It's all wrong," she explained to me as I followed her upstairs, and by "all" she characteristically meant just the house and furniture. "Your room is not so bad," she added, preceding me into it, "because I have had nearly everything but the bed taken out; the paper is decent, and you have the view. If you want anything useful, things like wardrobes—walnut with bevelled glass doors—they can be fetched back."

"But there seem to be heaps of jolly things," I hazarded, "all over the place."

"Oh no, nothing except what I brought in my trunks; and they make all the others look ghoulish."

Janie did not seek out pretexts for complaint, you understand; she drooped her head and just seemed to be fading away. And, indeed, she really had no appetite for our very sumptuous and elaborately served meals, and seemed most of the time lost in thought. It was extremely embarrassing. The place, even then, was not so bad of its kind, distressing as that kind might be to anyone with the artistic sense. Frankly, it was ordinary, with, of course, everything it contained to match, except Janie. I had arrived in excellent spirits, but, under her spell as I inveterately am, I too began to flag. After a few days I ventured to

suggest that Curwen, who followed her with his eyes like a dog—at that time she used to blow a tiny ivory whistle if she wished anything fetched, and he, if within call, used to come running—that Curwen would, of course, change anything she fancied in reason.

"He won't," she said; "I've tried. You don't know how conservative he is. He doesn't like a thing displaced. . . . The battles I have had over chairs even! To all my suggestions he has the same answer—his Aunt Charlotte wouldn't have liked it. Sometimes I feel I should like to dance on the grave of Aunt Charlotte; she is buried in the churchyard here. I feel as if she were keeping at least one eye on the place; I know Hugh thinks she does. She brought him up, and he was perfectly devoted, just as he is to me now, only that he will not change anything to please me because he did everything to please her, and she came first."

"Very awkward indeed!"

"It's tragic. Do understand," she clasped her hands, "I'm longing to alter everything, aching; I can't have any peace till I do; and because of old associations, particularly Aunt Charlotte, he won't hear of it, except in my own rooms. I had a fight to clear yours. Haven't you noticed Hugh's chin? I can never get the lines obstinate enough when I draw it. And I could make this place habitable—think, *habitable*—if I had a free hand; I could indeed."

"I am sure you could; but you will have to develop Mr. Curwen's artistic sense gradually. You must have patience."

"Patience! I shall die of it."

I was the only guest, and the situation began to grow monotonous. So you may imagine how delighted I was at the prospect of a new arrival—a certain Professor Pergerine, reputed a great connoisseur of the fine arts. The Curwens had met him on a Nile steamboat, and he was coming to inspect Janie's Burmese curios.

"He must have the balcony next yours," Janie roused herself to say to me.

"Aunt Charlotte's room?" enquired her husband, raising his eyebrows.

"It has the best view; it will be nearly full moon. There's nothing in the room to interest him."

Mr. Curwen winced. I don't think Janie meant to be cruel—it isn't in her; I simply think she was so absorbed in her ideas that she had quite lost sight of ordinary amenities, just as if, when she used to be "blocking out" something at school, someone came round to gossip, or to borrow a piece of bread or india-rubber, her mouth would grow hard and her funny little eyebrows would meet over her nose. It was then that I noticed in my host what I had never had occasion to remark before: I saw him think, and think hard. It made him look almost handsome. He had already told me how anxious he was that Janie should draw around her the people she really liked and the society to which she was used; but imagination was not his strong point, and though he knew what a sensitive organism he had undertaken to transplant, possibly until this moment he had mistaken his wife's very real artistic mission for some form of nervous whimsicality. An objective light from another mind may have thrown a fresh complexion on the matter, even though it came through a refracting medium; at any rate, he now said:

"Very well, Jan, put Peregrine in Aunt Charlotte's room; we must give our visitors our poor best."

I had already peeped into this august apartment; it really expressed very accurately, I suppose, the character of its late inmate, who, it seems, was a Price. The ladies of the Price family, Janie told me, had been held in esteem in the East Riding for their hospitality and housewifely qualities. It is related of one of them, possibly of Miss Charlotte, how terribly she had scared a young bride from the South of Ireland at her ceremonial entry into the family with the single enquiry—of

dread ritualistic import—what her oven was like. The room certainly, as it stood, could present no one point of appeal to little Janie, who was also, I suppose, unlearned in the matter of ovens. The balcony, you will have gathered, adjoined mine; with little effort I could have crossed into it; but the respective room doors were not so adjacent, because mine was shut off *en suite* at the end of a corridor, and this made me feel so isolated in the big, strange house that I used to leave the swing door of communication ajar. That, however, was not for the eerie pleasure of waking with a start between two and three the next morning that I might hear footsteps come cautiously along to my end of the corridor. Whose at that hour? They paused—at the swing door, I judged—and I wondered what was going to happen next. It was dark, for the moon was just then obscured by heavy clouds, and to put temptation to read in bed out of reach, I had moved the electric light.

You know how one feels in such a situation—a little nervous; even sleep-walkers are dangerous, though, it is true, chiefly to themselves. I held my breath; yes, someone was standing close at my door, as if listening also; then, as if reassured, this person gently opened the door beyond, entered, clicked on the light within, and began treading softly to and fro. I was really curious, and after waiting about ten minutes or so I got up and went out stealthily on to the balcony. It was a warm, wettest

morning in May; the mild air was deliciously fragrant and still. With a heart beating just a little faster than usual, I approached the right-hand balustrade, and leaning forward over it peered back into the next room. A long stream of light shot from the large windows across the terrace on to the lawns beyond, and upright, motionless, sad, in his evening things, as I had seen him last, in the middle of the room I beheld Mr. Curwen himself. Of course, I at once drew back and returned to bed, annoyed at my unnecessary perturbation. I even tried to go to sleep without speculating further. His affair, whatever it was, was no affair of mine. I felt strangely comforted, too. His was not only no unhallowed, burglarious presence, but one strong and loyal, like that of a good, faithful watchdog, and, while it yet remained, I dropped off again.

"I shall be bringing the professor up myself, Jan," said Mr. Curwen at breakfast. "You'll have plenty of time between this and then to make any alterations in his room you see fit. I have been looking round it, and I see that a good many things might be put away. Perhaps our other guest will be kind enough to help you."

A long sigh escaped Janie. She appeared almost timid, and that, I notice, is how decent people usually do appear on a victory.

Mr. Curwen rose, gathering up his letters, and blew her a kiss. This time he looked, I thought, quite handsome.

AT BIRD-NESTING-TIME.

FORTUNATE is the naturalist who, at that period of the year when, Saint Valentine's Day being past, the birds are engaged in their annual duty—which is also their greatest pleasure—of building and rearing their young, can escape from the worries and labours of ordinary

existence and go to wild strange places to pursue his or her favourite study. We know several enthusiastic lovers of Nature who do this; some go to the leafy Midlands; many to various points at the seaside where the colonies of water-birds may be observed and pictured; others prefer such marshes as are to be found in the neighbourhood of Aldeburgh or Thorpe; but our accomplished contributor, Miss Turner, has a preference for the Norfolk Broads. During "the only pretty ring-time" she is accustomed to make her dwelling in a houseboat on those waters, accompanied by a staunch and faithful servant who interferes as little as possible with the prolonged vigil and steady observation by means of which she is enabled to obtain the pictures that give delight to all who look at them. To-day we have the privilege of showing several examples of her charming art, and at the same time she has been so kind as to send notes telling us something of the manner in which they were obtained and of the appropriate surroundings. On the first of these pictures, that of the stonechat, she makes the following comment:

The accompanying photograph of a male stonechat is interesting because it shows how birds sometimes break away from tradition and build their nests in unlikely spots. This nest was placed in some coarse grass on an open marsh, although there were gorse-clad, dry banks close at hand. It was composed of the usual materials, moss, dry grass and wool, and in addition to these two bits of red worsted, a tuft of hare's fur, two moorhen's feathers, horsehair and some yellowish woolly hair belonging to a foal that roams these marshes and whose superfluous covering is "commandeered" by sundry birds in the neighbourhood. This is a very interesting case indeed. The stonechat is most familiar to the Nature-lover who is fond of roaming over-land

of a moor-like character where the firs and the gorse hold sway and cultivated plants are few in number. It is a charming, bold and handsome bird. One of its most favourite breeding-places is the edge of a fox-covert in a secluded part of an estate, and, though inconstant as regards the localities where it chooses to breed,

there is a gorse covert in the North where we have never sought its nest in vain. It of course disappears in winter; great numbers of the species migrate altogether, and all of them change their quarters, leaving the inland moor and wild solitudes for some haunts nearer the coast. It is very curious to learn that the stonechat in the photograph preferred to nest in some coarse grass on an open marsh, although its favourite nesting-ground, which Miss Turner describes as gorse-clad, dry banks, was close at hand. Such vagaries are by no means uncommon with birds. The thrush that usually nests in a hedge or clump of thorns will occasionally build on the ground like a partridge. We found one doing so during the present year, and the sheldrake, that usually makes its home in a rabbit-burrow, has been known to lay its eggs in a sandy hollow where there was no excavation whatever. The exceptions to the rule are, generally speaking, more interesting than the rule itself.

Two other illustrations are of that delightful little bird, the grasshopper warbler, on which Miss Turner gives a note that is in itself a little cameo of natural history.

Of all our smaller birds the grasshopper warbler is perhaps the shyest; but a charming little incident which occurred to me on June 3rd shows that in defence of their young they can be curiously bold. I was hidden within three reed-thatched hurdles, watching and photographing a pair of these birds engaged in feeding a lively brood of six. As the eldest knew all that was

necessary for self-preservation, and since I feared he might infect the rest I put him in my coat pocket. After an hour or so I placed him in my hat, which rested on my knees. He soon perched on the hat brim and began to call for food. Before long, to my great astonishment, I saw the hen bird come



E. L. Turner. MALE STONECHAT AND NEST. Copyright.

creeping, mouse-like, through the reeds, attracted by the cries of her first-born. She was just about to give him a juicy green caterpillar, but, finding herself face to face with a horrid human being, flew off. The youngster complained bitterly, and I remained motionless. The mother crept back directly, and, climbing to the top of the camera, called the little one to her and fed him. I then replaced him within the shelter, but a few inches further away from my face. It was not long before the courageous mother returned with some food, which she gave him, keeping one eye on me all the time. As I had secured several photographs, I decided not to try the hen bird's feelings any longer, and, after fixing a ring on the young one's leg, replaced him in the nest. This business occupied several minutes, during which the mother crept round and round, or with fluttering wings feigned injury, all the time uttering a curious weasel-like cry. The male bird also showed great anxiety, and frequently, when feeding the young in the nest, rapidly displayed his tail feathers, looking towards the camera and protesting vigorously. The female fed the brood from the far side of the nest, the male generally from the near; on no occasion could I secure a photograph of both together; one always slipped away the moment a faint rustling among the herbage announced the presence of the other. The food, as a rule, consisted of small green caterpillars, varied with an assortment of flies.

It is a very characteristic piece of portraiture, that of the hen bird "creeping, mouselike, through the reeds." It exactly



E. L. Turner. HEN GRASSHOPPER WARBLER FEEDING YOUNG. Copyright.

about 2 a.m. I went to my outside larder—it was pouring with rain—and fetched in the remains of a small joint of beef. Having quieted my owls, I placed the bone on a shelf in my tiny kitchen and again settled to sleep. Suddenly the whole boat gave a huge lurch, the kitchen window flew open and I thought someone had broken in. However, when fully awake I realised that the proximity of a beef bone to the open window had been too much for the morals of my big retriever dog.

More amusing stories are told about the owl than any other bird, and Miss Turner has added one to the number as well as giving us a clever and characteristic study of these interesting and amusing birds.

The most interesting of all the photographs we have reserved to the last. This is the picture of the great crested grebe's nest. Again we give Miss Turner's note:

I enclose a photograph of a great crested grebe's nest containing six eggs, the largest clutch I have ever met with. These were apparently all laid by one bird, and as only one bad egg was left in the nest, in all probability five hatched out. The situation is an unusually exposed one; from a little distance and with a pair of field-glasses I could see the male feeding both the female and the first chicks—hatched four days after this photograph was taken. The Broad where these birds nested is a private one; last year eighteen pairs of grebes bred there.

The grebe as a general rule lays only three or four of its greenish white eggs, so that if the clutch shown in the photograph were laid by a single



E. L. Turner. YOUNG LONG-EARED OWLS. Copyright.

expresses the nature of this little bird, which usually places its nest under long grass and approaches it running like a rat along its run. There is no greater puzzle to the boy bird-nester than that of finding the home of this beautiful and delicate little creature. When the locality of it can be determined, the method most commonly successful is a little crude. It is to walk over the ground and beat it till the bird is seen creeping silently away from its nest. It will often sit very close, however, and is one of those birds whose numbers cannot be guessed at because of their clever hiding habits. Not much is known either of its movements. The report of the British Association Migration Committee only makes the note in regard to it that on September 12th, 1881, two were killed in the night against the lantern of Spurn Lighthouse. It is curious, however, that such a small bird should make any endeavour to cross the sea.

Another illustration is that of two young long-eared owls, concerning which Miss Turner's comment is as follows:

These young long-eared owls were brought to my houseboat, and while with me insisted on appropriating a corner of my bookshelf. About 10 p.m. they became very lively and kept me awake with their curious shrill call, which resembles the creaking of a gate on rusty hinges. In despair,



E. L. Turner. MALE GRASSHOPPER WARBLER DISPLAYING TAIL. Copyright.

bird, the event is noteworthy. It touches on the curious fact that birds are able to control the number of their offspring. Those that, as a rule, lay only one or two eggs can, when these have been destroyed by accident, produce a second supply apparently at will; but it is extraordinary that a bird which usually lays only three or four eggs should double the number. Of course, it is always difficult for an observer to say that the eggs in a nest have come from one bird, and it may possibly be that the clutch represents the united efforts of two hens. We have called this the best picture, but really the best one is



E. L. Turner. GREAT CRESTED GREBE'S NEST. Copyright.

scarcely inferior pleasure, and studying such photographs as these.

that left to the imagination. It is a picture of an enthusiastic naturalist during the delightful months of spring living in constant communion with Nature and finding in the field and in the marsh, in the meadow and in the woodland, a thousand fresh surprises, a thousand new friends every day. People sometimes say that the country is dull, but it never can be so to those who share those interests which the naturalist feels, and which even the world outside can enjoy with

OLD EDINBURGH SUPPER CLUBS.

LORD ROSEBERY the other day shed a tear over the melancholy fate of the Supper Clubs of Old Edinburgh. They have vanished, never again to be resuscitated, and with them has fled the spirit of wit and gaiety, the homely convivial customs and the literary distinction that once illuminated the High Street and the Canongate. The charge of extinguishing the supper meal and the supper clubs was whimsically laid at the doors of the licensing magistrate. Early Closing has taken from the modern Edinburgh citizen the privilege of supping in tavern or change-house as his forefathers did. If he feasts in places of public entertainment after hours, he does so with the terrors of the law hanging over his head. Alas! a more arbitrary arrest has been laid upon the old-time supper and supper club than anything contained in police regulations. These institutions flourished and abounded most at a time when church and municipal authority fulminated their loudest against late drinking. The "noisy Ten-hours' drum" might close the town gates and "gar a' the trades gang daunderin' hame." The Burgh Act might proclaim that "the not



FLESHMARKET CLOSE.



LIBERTON'S WYND.

obliging persons to repair timeously to their lodgings at night is one of the most abounding causes of the prevailing drunkenness, night revelling and other immoralities and disorders," and "prohibit all persons from being in taverns, cellars, etc., after 10 o'clock at night," under penalties at the discretion of the magistrates. But the magistrates themselves sat on over their wine or punch, or only changed their "howff." Judges on the bench were among the most ardent bacchanalians and notorious law-breakers:

Wi' sang and glass they fley the power
O' care that wud harass the hour.

Grave doctors of divinity and world-famous philosophers were of those who slipped in at supper-time to the board of their favourite club to feast on a "haddock lug" or "crappit heads," and take their share in the flow of soul and of liquor. Changes of customs and of social conditions have killed the old clubs and have buried the records and the very names of some of them almost past recovery. Lord Cockburn noted the advancing change of hours and habits—the shadow moving forward on the dial—a century before Lord Rosebery. Up till about 1763—when the Cape Club was reconstituted on an improved basis—one o'clock

was the prevailing dinner-hour. It moved, "not without groans and predictions," from two on to three and to four, where it stuck for several years. We are reminded that Jonathan Oldbuck, about 1804, invited his friends to his "cœnobitical symposium," where savoury Scottish viands were washed down with draughts of port at four o'clock precisely. The "good old hour" yielded its place, and five became the polite dinner-time until about 1820. "Six has at last prevailed," wrote Cockburn about the middle of the century, "and half an hour later is not unusual." Within his memory fashion had shifted the meal forward three and a-half hours, "a stand being regularly made at the end of every half-hour against each encroachment." It has shifted further, in the same direction, since Cockburn's day; it has squeezed supper, and along with it the supper club, out of existence.

In Old Edinburgh, a law more potent even than prevailing fashion—that of necessity—helped to bring into being, and afterwards to blight and slay, the supping clubs which were so essential a feature of the city life in the eighteenth century. Within the restricted limits of space and air and light imposed upon the inhabitants, when they dwelt within the cincture of the Flodden Wall, home hospitalities were well-nigh impossible. Persons of quality could not well entertain their friends in confined lodgings up many flights of stairs in a narrow Edinburgh close. They met, perforce, to exchange ideas, to transact business and to indulge in the "high jinks" and deep potations that accorded with the taste of the time, in cosy inns or in "laigh cellars," where, if there was little room, there was liberty, and indeed licence, of speech and behaviour. The dancing assemblies of polite society were held in confined quarters at the West Bow, or in Old Assembly Close, to the light of guttering tallow candles, while lines of coaches and sedan chairs with linkboys waited at the narrow entrance, before more spacious accommodation was found for them, and for the classical concerts in which Edinburgh began to take delight, in St. Cecilia's Hall, in the Cowgate, a building now converted into a stationer's ware-room. Gentlemen, and even

condescension as well as at the wit and vivacity of these high-born and reputable dames, who, often in masks, made themselves at home in squalid surroundings and regaled themselves with raw oysters and flagons of porter, followed by rum punch or brandy



JENNY HA'S CHANGE-HOUSE OPPOSITE QUEENSBERRY HOUSE.

toddy. Taste and custom sometimes alter suddenly; and whereas in 1783 these laigh cellars were still in vogue as the rendezvous of private dancing and supper parties of the *élite*—known as "frolics"—five years later they had sunk completely out of repute. When the famous Jane, Duchess of Gordon, attempted, in 1793, to revive, along with a "frolic," the memories of old times, it was found that the spirit of the institution had quite evaporated. Old Edinburgh was already becoming New. In maps, drawings and records of a hundred years earlier and more the beginnings of the change can be traced. Edinburgh was already "bursting her steeks" before the Treaty of Union. Suburban burghs formed around the city gates, and became the resort of special crafts. But the Nor' Loch, the town's moat of defence on the north in war, became the great barrier to expansion in piping times of peace. At length, in 1769, the North Bridge strode across the valley; the stately New Town began to rise on the open fields beyond; and change came with a rush. The Loch was drained to let Modern Athens come into being. In Ferguson's verses, the rush of the escaping water through the sluices can be heard,

An inundation big as

The burn that neath the Nor' Loch brig is, on the site now occupied by the Waverley Station. With it ebbed much of the spirit of Old Edinburgh—of the *raison d'être* of the supper clubs.

For many years after, as well as before, this epoch-making date, clubs—social, literary and political—sprouted like mushrooms in the soil of Edinburgh society. They took eccentric names and forms, suited to the humour of the age and the scene. One of the earliest was the Horn Order, instituted in 1705 by that distinguished beau, John, third Earl of Selkirk, and named from the incidental use of a horn spoon by one of its members. Some were composed of madcap fellows, around whose orgies and ritual—for instance, those of the Hellfire Club—horrifying traditions gathered. Others were of the staidest;

and of these may have been the Humdrum Club, unless the title were chosen in raillery. Names were imposed from some whim of the moment or peculiarity of dress or fare or custom. The Odd Fellows made a point of writing their names upside down; the



WHITE HORSE CLOSE.

ladies of rank and fashion, did not disdain to meet and refresh themselves in oyster-cellars down steep flights of steps leading from the High Street or the adjoining wynds and closes; and Captain Popham, a visitor of 1776, was astounded at the

Doctors of the Faculty "pleased themselves by calling themselves Physicians and wearing gown and wig"; on the other hand, the Bonnet Laids sat bonneted; at the Dirty Club it was permitted to "no gentleman to appear in clean linen"; and the Black Wigs presented themselves in sable perukes. At the Wig Club, which met in Fortune's Tavern in the Old Stamp Office Close, each new entrant drank "a quart of claret without pulling bit" before settling down to twopenny ale, with "Soutar's clods" and penny pies brought from the Baijen Hole in Forrester's Wynd; at the Pious, or Piehouse, Club, the initiatory drink was a gill of toddy, served from a decanter; the Industrious Company of Porter-drinkers acted up to their name. According to the *Caledonian Mercury* of October, 1733, the Assembly of Birds added to a taste for music and conviviality "a strong bias against the Excise laws." The Æsculapians appear to have made a speciality of repairing the gravestones of dead members. The Six Foot Club, a company of which Scott, Wilson and the Ettrick Shepherd were late members, and of whom a glimpse is afforded us, at Hunter's Tryst, in Stevenson's "St. Ives," were tall fellows of two yards or more, who sought air and appetite for supper far afield.

James Boswell, in his salad days in Edinburgh, was a member of the Soaping Club, whose meeting-place was Thom's Tavern. One gathers from the preposterous correspondence of "Bozzy" and his friend Captain Andrew Erskine, published in 1763, that the club met every Tuesday evening to sup and to play the facetious game of "Snip, Snap, Snorum," and that the motto of the members was "Every man soap his own beard," meaning every man let loose his own humour, a rule which they seem to have followed to the uttermost. To "soap the beard," or indulge the fancy, is a catchword in the letters that passed between the two young bucks, whose ambitions oscillated between "glory and the Guards" and shining as leaders of fashion and letters; and the razors of their wits are exercised with fantastic flourishes. They belattered each other with "odes," and Erskine, as a "Cub"—a name he seems to have richly deserved—writes to his flighty friend of the rueful countenance:

You kindly took me up, an awkward Cub,
And introduced me to the Soaping Club,
Where, every Tuesday-even, our ears are blest
With genuine humour and with genuine jest;
The voice of mirth ascends the list'ning sky,
While soap his own beard every man, you cry.
Say, who could ere indulge a yarn or nap,
When Barclay roars for Snip, and Bainbridge Snap?

At Thom's, Alexander Donaldson, the publisher, seems to have entertained his literary neophytes to Gargantuan suppers, the



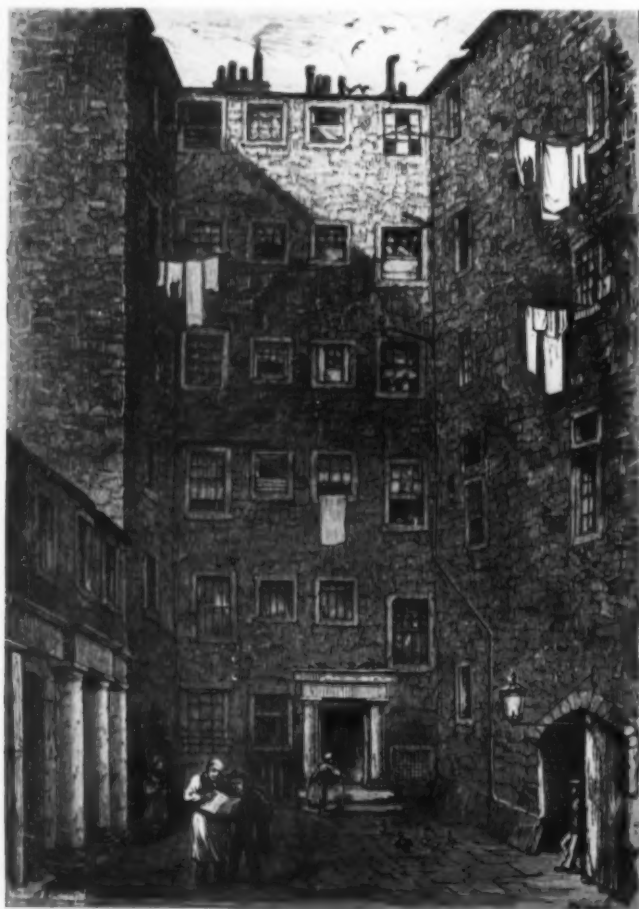
CRAIG'S CLOSE.

drinks and viands including Boswell's favourite hock and "apple-pie with raisins and mutton with cauliflower," with the customary "whet" of Solan goose from the Bass Rock, now an unappreciated and almost forgotten dainty. "Repeat it not in John's Coffee House, neither whisper it in the Abbey of Holyrood House," writes Erskine. "I shall never forget the fowls and oyster sauce that bedecked the board; fat were the fowls and the oysters of the true Pandour or Croat kind." And Boswell sings:

And now, perhaps, the luxum wife
Of Vintner Thom consults her spouse,
How those who play the keenest knife,
She best may feast within her hoase. . . .
Haste! let me thither hie with purpose good,
To swallow monstrous quantities of food!

But the supper-tables of the Old Edinburgh clubs were not everywhere spread on this costly and lavish scale. There were clubs as well as taverns for all degrees and for all tastes. "While the learned judge or the eminent counsel would be firing off broad jests and quaffing jorums of punch and magnums of claret in Clerihugh's Tavern, Writers' Court," the scene of Counsellor Pleydell's high-jinks, now annexed to the Council Buildings, "or in Paterson's Chophouse in the Fleshmarket Close, his clerk would be found regaling himself with mutton-pies and 'twopenny' in Lucky Wood's in the Cowgate, or some other howff suited to his degree." Even the men of the higher ranks knew how to combine thrift with pleasure, and would "sup sumptuously on rizzured haddies or sheephead and trotters where they could themselves keep an eye on the progress of the cooking." Note may be made of the Spendthrift Club, a group of well-to-do citizens, whose members supped nightly, after a preparatory walk "in the teeth of the wind," at a charge not exceeding "a groat and a bawbee"; of the Marrowbones Club, which met at Paterson's to feast on marrowbones, in the faith that "a large quantity of drink could be superimposed on that dish"; and of the Cape Club, that lingered out its old age at Bourgois's, in the same convivial neighbourhood of the Fleshmarket Close, and in its palmy days was induced with great reluctance to raise from 4½d. to 6d. the limit of expenditure on the good things of the table.

Robert Fergusson, the precursor of Burns, the unhappy and short-lived bard of the "Plainstones and Causey," of whom R. L. Stevenson sometimes fancied himself to be the reincarnation, was "Precentor" of the Knights of the Cape. He was born in the Cap and Feather Close in the old "Hie Gait," under the shadow of the Tron steeple, and is the true poet of the social life and atmosphere of eighteenth century Edinburgh. Burns flashed across that society like a meteor; but Fergusson grew up in the air of "clarty and cozy," hard-drinking Auld Reekie, and



CLERIHUGH'S TAVERN: WRITERS' COURT.

may be said to have died of its influences. He was of those "bumper-drinking blades," the Cape Club, whose members, among whom sat, at different times, the notorious Deacon Brodie as "Sir Llyud," and Sir Henry Raeburn as "Sir Toby," drank porter—under the name of "Thames Water"—out of "foaming green stoups." But he looked in also at the "Pandemonium" and other gatherings of the elect, and, along with Runciman, the painter, was a member and debater at the "Robinhood"—whose later history, under the name of the Pantheon, has just been related in the first volume of the Old Edinburgh Club:

Now in the Cape closet a table's preparing,
With Welsh Rabbits garnished and good Glasgow herring;
Oh what Caller Tuppenny then shall be quaffed,
And of thee, Oh Thames Water, a terrible draught!

In Fergusson's time, the Knights of the Cape had removed from their first meeting-place in the Isle of Man Arms, Craig's Close, and assembled in the Old Fleshmarket Close, and were already a body of some standing in age. Tradition relates that the name was derived from the adventures of an early member, living in the extra-mural region of Calton, who, lingering over his drink until the ten o'clock drum had been beaten and the town gates closed, had difficulty in bribing the porter at the Netherbow for exit, and in "weathering the Cape" at the head of Leith Wynd. It survived to celebrate its sixty-fifth birthday in 1798, and with it went many memories of "mirth, music, and porter deepest-dyed."

But the Poet of the Clubs was also a frequent visitor at "Luckie Middlemass's in the Cowgate," a famous and fashionable oyster tavern in the depths of the hollow behind the Tron Kirk:

When big as burns the gutters rin
If ye hae catch'd a droukit skin,
To Luckie Middlemist loup in,
And sit fu' snug
Owre oysters and a dram o' gin,
Or haddock lug.

He was familiar, too, with the good fare and company—chiefly minions of the law—to be met with before the Session was up at "Indian Peter's" and at Rob Gibb's, tavern-keepers who dispensed their wares to drouthy customers in the very precincts of the Outer House; and, like other clubmen, he wandered far afield for change of air and entertainment—to Duddingston, "for sheepheads famed of yore," to Newhaven, to the Shore of Leith, where

Lawson, chiefest of the Scottish
hosts
To nimble-footed waiters gives
command
The cloth to lay,

and to the shores of Fife.

The supper clubs and supper taverns gathered most thickly in the vicinity of the Law Courts and in the region between the Tron and the Lawnmarket, although samples were found as far removed from the centre of conviviality as the White Horse Close, at the foot of the Canongate and the Abbey Sanctuary. Judges and counsel were among the most assiduous attenders; and many tales have been handed down of the table exploits and sallies of wit and of humour, more or less refined, of the formidable Braxfield, of the eccentric Eskgrove, of the mighty Newton, of Hermand, who, according to Cockburn, had "acted in more of the severer scenes of old Scotch drinking" than any man of his time. "The cordiality inspired by claret and punch was felt by him as so congenial to all right thinking that he was confident he could convert the Pope if he could only get him to sup with him." Henry Erskine and other brilliant luminaries of the Bar were wont to "set the table in a roar" at John's Coffee House in the Parliament Close, or Clerihugh's Star and Garter across the High Street, or to drop in at the Cock and Trumpet in Bell's Wynd; at Jenny Ha's change-house (a lath-and-plaster structure in the Canongate, famous for its claret, of which Gay, the poet, and his cronies are alleged to have partaken, not wisely but too well); at Currie's tavern in Craig's Close, famed for its "pap-in"—small beer and whisky mixed with oatmeal—or at pawky Johnie Dowie's in Liberton Wynd, where Robert Burns, on taking lodgings hard by in the Lawnmarket, had soon a special "coffin" assigned to him.

In 1787 Burns was introduced to the Crochallan Fencibles, who gathered in "Queen Mary's Council Room" in Daune Douglas's tavern at the head of the Anchor Close. It was founded by William Smellie, and is supposed to have taken its name from the beautiful Gaelic air of "Colin's Cattle," sung by the landlord. Of the old house only the lintels are left, and the Crochallan Club, after lingering far into the second half of the nineteenth century, is extinct like almost all its contemporaries. It had connecting ties, through the philosophers, critics and poets who were members of both, with the Mirror Club (originally the Tabernacle), re-named from the famous magazine, edited by the Man of Feeling, which first issued from Creech's bookshop in the Luckenbooths in 1779. The Mirror was more a literary than a social club, and to maintain the mystery of its operations it flitted from tavern to tavern—from Clerihugh's to Somers's inn, opposite the Guard House, to Stewart's oyster house in the Old Fishmarket Close, or to Luckie Dunbar's in an old alley between Forrester's and Liberton Wynds. The Erskine Club had also strong associations with literature and the drama. After the first rehearsal in 1756 of John Home's "Douglas," in which Principal Robertson, Dr. Blair and "Jupiter" Carlyle are said to have taken part, the company supped with the club at the old inn beside the abbey gateway once tenanted by Allan Ramsay's "Luckie Spence."

One hears, perhaps, an echo of the talk, as well as gets a glimpse of the liquor, at the old supper clubs in the passage in the will of David Hume, in which he leaves to his old friend

"Norval," in addition to claret, "six dozen of port, provided he attests, under his hand, signed 'John Hume,' that he has himself 'finished a bottle at two sittings,' and thus 'at once terminate the only two differences that ever arose between us concerning temporal matters.'" With port and with the close of the century greater formality came into the manners and festive usages of good society; clubs conformed themselves to the age, or died out. But old customs die hard. When the closes were deserted for the New Town and the South Side, there was a flitting of some of the more aspiring clubs and taverns to sites nearer the haunts of fashion. A number gathered in the precincts of Shakespeare Square—now occupied by the General Post Office—to which the theatre had removed from Playhouse Close. The Boar Club, whose quaint annals and customs have been described by Robert Chambers, met—Poet Laureate, Champion, Archbishop, Chief Grunter and common "boars"—in Daniel Hogg's tavern; and the East India Club—which, like the Capillaires, took to giving balls and suppers under the patronage of peeresses—in the house of John Bayll. Fortune's Tavern,



CARDINAL BEATON'S HOUSE.
From Reminiscences of Old Edinburgh, by Daniel Wilson.

in the Stamp Office Close, became in 1795 Fortune's Tontine Hotel, at the east end of Princes Street, not far removed from Ambrose's, in Gabriel's Road, the scene of the "Noctes." But it never recovered the glory it possessed in days when the Lord High Commissioner's procession issued from the closehead into the High Street, or when, in 1792, Walter Scott and Francis Jeffrey, two newly-fledged advocates, rushed off together from the "den" in George Square to sup at propitious "Fortune's."

Not only has the glory departed from the Old Edinburgh supper clubs and taverns. Nearly all of them and their records have utterly perished. Of the eighteenth century debating clubs, the Speculative Society, to which Scott and R. L. S. belonged, yet survives. The Wagering Club has still an annual dinner, and preserves the minutes of wagers made when "Bony" was first rising into notice; the Presbytery gave up the ghost after being moved from its old quarters in Milne's Square by the new Scotsman buildings. The former haunts of revelry and good-fellowship are now to be seen only in prints and pictures, for Old Edinburgh itself is rapidly disappearing. Lord Rosebery was startled to find that in his own lifetime two-thirds of the ancient landmarks had been removed. We should try at least to keep their memory green.

JOHN GEDDIE.



THERE is nothing more delightful about the pleasant little Jacobean house which Mr. Leonard Borwick has made his country home than the way up to it. It stands on a south slope with a fine view of the Downs, and the ground which forms its garden lies some feet above the road. A little higher up the hill, therefore, a causeway leaves the road and carries a path of easy gradient up to the level of the garden doorway—a small structure of considerable presence, being made of ashlar and having a pediment and ball-topped finials above its arch. The garden wall to the north of the doorway is kept high, so that no one walking up the path and knocking at the door can see over. But south of the doorway the wall is lower, for the rapidly descending road even thus ensures privacy to those in the garden, while they obtain a view on to the road and over the prospect beyond. A broad flagged way, bisecting the trim grass plat, leads from the garden door to the porch, which forms a corresponding architectural feature. Over its arched doorway runs a frieze supported on brackets with some carving and dates and initials, and above this a curved pediment set with the same ball finials as the gateway. The porch is the only decorative member of the west front, which, for the rest, is not very interesting. It takes the form of a rather dull wall of local ragstone brick coigned and broken by the porch, which has a window on

each side of it and three above. These windows have lost something of their original form and appearance. Only the one to the south of the porch seems quite satisfactory in its proportions, and even here wooden frames set with large panes of glass have replaced the iron casements and lead lights. The other windows suffer severely from plate-glass, except that each has one latticed casement. But the whole structure of the windows must at some time or another have been altered, for the ashlar framings do not fit the drip headings above them or the rubble stonework at their side. It will be noticed that the headings are of moulded brick, and carry the mind to the splendid brick houses erected in the Eastern Counties in Tudor days. Were the original window mullions of the same character and material, and were they replaced later by Stewart stonework? As the present mullions are much worn and weathered, this may be the case, though the general appearance looks like later patchwork. The windows are no longer of the original width. This is especially observable in the case of the northern one on the upper tier. The heading extends considerably beyond the present ashlar of the three lights, and the space on each side has been filled in with rubble-stone of a different character to the wall masonry and not tied into it. The brickwork retains quite a Gothic spirit. If it dates from Queen Elizabeth's day it is rather a survival, and it cannot well be later. Near the north corner of this west front



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THE WEST ELEVATION.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE WAY IN.

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IN THE GARDEN

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE SOUTH-WEST PARLOUR.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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LOOKING ON TO THE SOUTH DOWNS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and about 18in. from the ground is a stone bearing a date as early as 1588. But the dates on the porch are 1610 and 1656, while the year 1663 is set on a panel with initials high up in the north gable. It is evident that the house was subjected to a good deal of alteration by successive owners under Elizabeth and the Stewarts, and it will be as well to say a word or two about them. They were of the families of Hall and of Cooke, and the house is known either as Hall Place or Cooke's House. It is situated in the vil of West Burton, which is a chapelry or tything of the parish of Bury. Arundel lies four miles southward, beyond the ridge of downland which forms so desirable a part of the outlook from Cooke's House. But there is a break in the ridge, through which the Arun River flows, having Bury Village on its right bank and on its left Amberley, with its picturesque castle, now used as a farm. Both these parishes formed part of the great Honour of Arundel, which stretched over all this section of Sussex and included even the important Percy lordship of Petworth. In

they all relate to the later generations of Cookes. The panel on the north gable bears the device:

C
N. F
C
E. R
1663

The upper initials refer to Nicholas Cooke the elder, who still held the place at the date mentioned on the inscription, while the letters E. and R. probably stand for his father and mother, Robert and Eliza Cooke. Nicholas succeeded an elder brother, Allen, and he is commemorated by the initials A. C. and the date 1610 on the porch. As most of the work, both inside the house and out, gives the impression that it was done in James I.'s reign, it may well be put down to these two brothers. Small as the house is, it shows a good deal of finish. The panelling and plaster-work of the chief parlour, the woodwork of the stair, and of other features of the interior, all show the considerable sacrifice to the æsthetic sense which quite humble men were ready to make in the seventeenth century. But this is still more noticeable outside. How few men putting up eight-roomed houses to-day would give themselves such a garden enclosure! Besides the principal doorway there is another arched entrance to the south, which is simple enough now, but gives the idea of having once been as important as its fellow to the west. All the garden walling is coped with large blocks of stone shaped into a semi-circle. Although most of the garden ground was, no doubt, used for utilitarian purposes, we must conclude that the carefully-levelled plat in front of the house was intended for a modest use of the knots and parterres then fashionable.

Assuredly the Cooke brothers had a copy of the "New Orchard," that treatise published in 1618 wherein William Lawson urged upon small country gentlemen the delights of gardening, and though he mainly wrote of fruits, vegetables and the general supply of the table, yet reminded his readers that the environment of their house would only be "half good so long as it wants those comely ornaments that should give beauty to all our labours, and make much for the honest delight of the owner and his friends." And so he gives a picture of a garden with a little square of knots and a fountain near the house before the general fruit and vegetable ground is reached. Something of the kind the Cookes probably attempted. Now, in more modern fashion, a lawn, broken only by the flagged way, occupies the centre of the plat, and broad borders, well furnished with shrubs and herbaceous plants, are set against the boundary wall. A cedar affords shade in a corner and, with the old tiled roof of one of the farm sheds below, makes an admirable garden composition. The other houses of the hamlet, the whole life of a tiny agricultural community, are in close contact with this open, airy, sunny spot, and yet its clever disposition secures



Copyright.

THE HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Bury parish—including West Burton—lands were held under the lord of Arundel by copyhold tenure, or on leases for lives or for 10,000 years. But a century ago a Duke of Norfolk obtained an Act of Parliament to enable his tenants to enfranchise their lands, and many took advantage of it. In Elizabeth's time, however, the manor of West Burton was held on long leasehold by the last male of the family of Hall—or de Aula as the Latin documents wrote it—whose daughter married Richard Cooke. These were Cookes of Heene and of Wickham, and Richard came of the latter branch, which had allied itself with the Bohuns of Medhurst, so that the Sussex Visitation of 1634 recognised their right to quarter the Bohun cross with their own three crescents and a canton ermine. Of Richard Cooke, who, through his wife, Margaret Hall, acquired the West Burton property, nothing is related. He and his descendants for four generations continued in occupation and gave the house the character it still possesses. The number of the initials and dates on the house are perplexing rather than enlightening, but

it against prying eyes, and gives a sense of recluseness. Generally this desirable end can only be attained by lofty encircling walls, shutting out all knowledge of what is beyond. But in the little garden of Cooke's House you are out of the world and yet in it, for the fall of the ground to south and west makes what is on the outside a fully protective rampart a mere parapet on the inside. Thus the eye is enabled to roam freely over the wide Sussex landscape, and watch the ever-changing play of light and shade on the downland, with its smooth, bare tops and well-timbered hollows. The thatched buildings and cornstacks in the yard just below remove all sense of loneliness and desertion. We are in touch with the primary business of life, with that old-fashioned agriculture which has transformed the wilderness into a smiling land of plenty, tamed and disciplined by man's hand, yet not spoiled and oppressed by his more modern and mechanical manifestations. We meet the same old-time sense if we cross the threshold. There is no crowding of trivialities, no despairingly

clever cheapness of single commodities made expensive by their teeming multiplicity. The necessary furniture only is to be found in the white-washed hall. Yet what a picture it makes, for every piece is chosen as apt, as belonging both to the age and to the class of the house with which it associates. Cool in the summer, and next to the kitchen, this little hall is the very place for a simple midday meal, or for an hour's quiet study. The adequacy of the lines and details of the room and of its contents satisfy the mind, but their severity and restraint do not distract it. As a contrast, the parlour is almost sumptuous. The country plasterer, of an age when plastering was an art, has wrought a rich frieze of fruit depending from rings and garlanded about a festoon of drapery. Below it the walls are wainscotted with hand-made and adzeleft panels of oak, revealing all the grain and feather of the wood. An old brick-fire arch affords a hearth nearly 6ft. across, where logs may crackle upon andirons and against a fire-back, no doubt the produce of a Sussex forge, for Sussex was still a centre of the iron trade when the Cookes built their home. Such furniture as is not of the seventeenth century is of the very beginning of the eighteenth, and is all of the homely, yet excellent, kind that the lesser country gentry or the richer yeomen obtained in sufficient, but never in abundant, quantity.

Mr. Leonard Borwick has fully understood this. Everything about his oak room is right. There is no crowding, and therefore every object and feature has its due value. But he not only understands form and arrangement—he keenly appreciates tone. The whole of the oak, both of the panels and of the furniture, is admirable in colour and in texture. The grain has been cleared of the treacly thickness which oil, varnish and other treatments so often give, and its clean surface shows the figure of the wood to perfection under the thinnest coat of well-rubbed beeswax. At the same time, the dark browns, or the hot, ruddy yellows, which are all too frequent, are gone, and pleasant cool greys have taken their place. Never has a well-chosen little collection of good and original pieces received better treatment and more adequate presentment. Mr. Leonard Borwick is only a tenant, and so such little defects as the present glazing of the windows continue; but whatever falls to the part of a tenant to do has been done in exactly the right spirit, and the visitor feels that the place has stood still, has remained unaltered not only in its fabric but in the mode of life carried on within and around it, ever since Nicholas Cooke the younger assigned his interest to Elizabeth Stump in 1683, and Cooke's House knew the Cookes no more. T.

LESSER COUNTRY HOUSES OF TO-DAY.

IV.—MEADOW COTTAGE, NEAR AMBERLEY, SUSSEX, DESIGNED BY MR. DOUGLAS MURRAY.

IN speaking, in the foregoing article, of the good work done of old by the Cookes when contriving their modest house and garden at West Burton, "the sacrifice to the æsthetic sense which quite humble men were ready to make in the seventeenth century" was favourably contrasted with the

methods of to-day. Yet near by, standing on the other side of the Arun, is a little house of recent construction which shows that the former spirit has not entirely died out, and, when allowed scope to display itself, is still capable of quite excellent expression. The river Arun bisects Sussex from north to south, and flows through some of that county's choicest lands. It waters a country of rich flats and moderate elevations during its upper course, but long ere it reaches Arundel on its way to the sea it encounters the South Downs, and has to make many a bend and circuit to enable it to pass through this barrier. This lends much picturesqueness to its valley, on the edge of which, looking southward on to the down-encompassed vale, stands the very charming and well-designed house of cottage character which is the subject of the accompanying illustrations. To be thoroughly appreciated it should be seen, for the art of the photographer does not reveal all its good qualities. Crossing the bridge from the West Burton side and rising from the river, the road on its way north-east to Amberley Village skirts the Down above the slope which the house and garden occupy. This lie of the land has been seized upon to give character to the setting and laying out of the building and its environment. It has been done very successfully, though the necessity of duly treating a difficult piece of ground without outrunning the available sum alarmed the designer, who says: "There was a nasty irregular fall from north to south, and a greater one from east to west, and it was impossible to adequately deal with this site within

the limits of cost imposed." It is coping with difficulty that brings out ability, and though, of course, a bottomless purse could have produced bigger results, the great merit and interest of this little place is that, in mass and in detail, it possesses charm and distinction, and has not been expensive. After all, the cottage-



Copyright.

THE ENTRANCE OR NORTHERN FRONT.

—COUNTRY LIFE.

needing million-
aire is a very
exceptional
person. Such
modest habitations
are for those of
moderate, if not
slender, means,
and the hard prob-
lem of housing
them otherwise
than in the normal
jerry-builder's
villa, and yet of
not bringing them
within the fringe
of the workhouse,
is the one whose
happy solution
tests the capacity
of the modern
architect. Tried
under these condi-
tions the archi-
tect of the house
we are describing
comes out with
flying colours. It
stands 30ft. or 40ft.
west of the road and
is approached from
it diagonally down

a broad flight of steps and along a pathway of local flat but unsquared stones which leads to the door at the back or north side of the house. Westward of this door, the office wing springs out of the main block of the house at an angle corresponding with the angle of the entrance steps from the road. The precise direction of the fall in the land made this the line of least resistance, occasioned the least movement of soil and building of retaining walls, and was, therefore, the most economical scheme. A note of pleasant originality was thus obtained concordant with practical utility. It was not a conceit artificially dragged in, but a business-like arrangement that naturally came about. Such is the perfection of aim in all design.

This is another case of a house where no one has stood between the fully-trained designer and the exact fulfilment of his scheme—where architect and owner are one and the same person. In one other respect also it is not typical of what may be done as a rule, but owes some of its present amenity to an exceptional circumstance. Though quite recently erected, it has no look of rawness because it is very largely composed of old material. Evidently the bricks, the tiling, the timbers of some condemned



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FROM THE WEST OR LOWER GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

buildings in the
neighbourhood
were available,
were gladly seized
upon by the de-
signer and were
used by him with
judgment and suc-
cess. The great
roof, typical of the
county's ancient
homes, already
shows a slight wave
and has a mellow
tone. The old oak
timbers of the
southern gable and
of other projecting
parts lend almost
an air of venera-
bility to this youth-
ful structure, and
the effect is well
carried out by the
rough finish of
the plaster. As
circumstances per-
mitted this agree-
able, if somewhat
artificial, look of
premature age to
be given to the

exterior in general, it seems rather a pity that the desired effect should be in some measure marred if not missed by the use, in the occasional weather-boarded portions, of painted deal of the most smooth, finished and mechanical modern type. Paint and regularity combine to create a dissonance. The whole aspect is



Copyright. THE SOUTH OR GARDEN FRONT.

"C.L."



Copyright.

SOUTH-EAST GABLE.

"C.L."

not one of harmonious completeness. There is a lack of loving relationship between the members; a slight hostility of the parts, as if they rather resented their enforced juxtaposition. This would have been avoided by using rough-sawn elm for the weather-boarding, which, in two seasons if not in one, would have assumed a wavy irregularity of line and a silver greyness of tone giving an air of close affinity to all the materials used. This treatment, owing to the inevitable winding of this wood, calls for felt between it and the wall behind if the latter is composed of 4½ in. quartering filled in with brick, but the expense is small, and it has been used for the upper floors of quite cheap cottages for farm labourers. The little Amberley house is of so engaging and enjoyable a kind, and so much taste and feeling

has reigned over its contrivance, that importance is given to the least jarring note, to a defect which, in the general run of houses, would escape detection amid the general commonplaceness. That is why the chimney of the low office wing catches the eye as it should not. The great stack at the east end, with its three elaborate shafts, is admirable. It has presence, size, balance. It is a leading feature in a leading position. It draws due attention to its honourable function of serving the principal rooms. Equally good and appropriate is the more massive stack that rises out of the main roof further westward. But where the more modest part of the house is reached, no feature should attract attention by the saliency of its proportions. Stuck centrally on the ridge of the humble outhouse roof, the single shaft, shooting up high and slim, asserting itself by its diagonal setting on its base and by its enrichment of many mouldings, is certainly out of place. Its presence, rising through and above the pergola, as seen in the view taken from the west garden, was so distracting in an otherwise delightful composition that it has

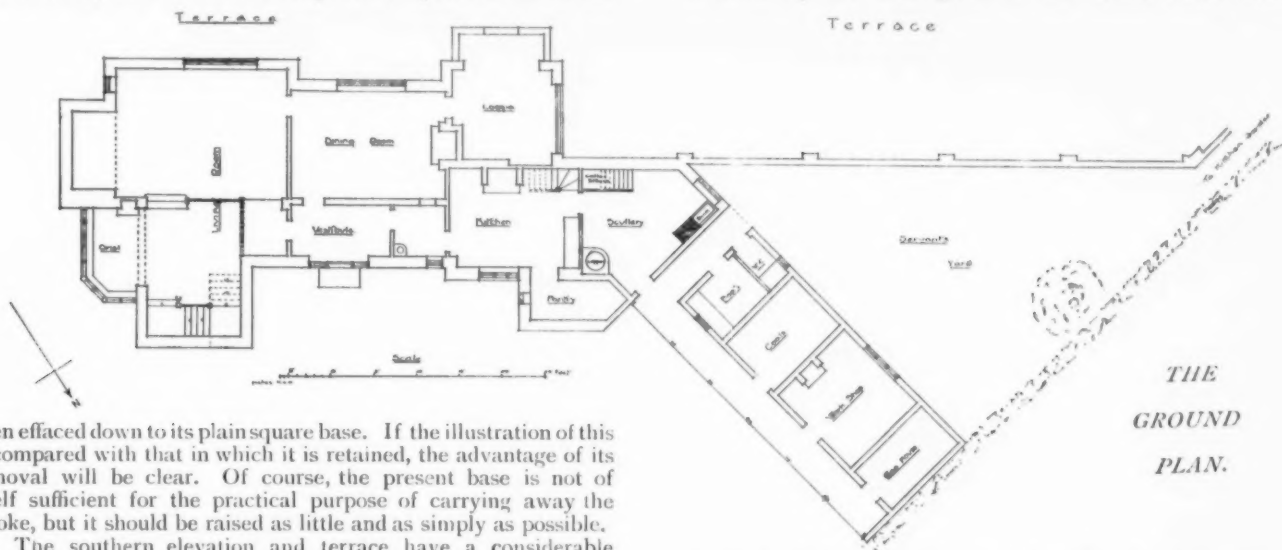


Copyright.

THE HOUSE AND ITS SITE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

many-mullioned oriel occupies its eastern side. Space, incident and variety are thus given to the room, which must be

THE
GROUND
PLAN.

been effaced down to its plain square base. If the illustration of this is compared with that in which it is retained, the advantage of its removal will be clear. Of course, the present base is not of itself sufficient for the practical purpose of carrying away the smoke, but it should be raised as little and as simply as possible.

The southern elevation and terrace have a considerable space between them and the road, which is not at right angles to the house. This space is separated from the terrace by a retaining wall, and the growth of hedge and trees will soon give shelter and privacy to the garden. A broad flagged way runs along the south front and there is access to it from the house through an open-sided room or loggia. Beyond the house, this flagged way passes under a pergola of rough timbers—a wall sheltering it on the north—and then reaches a flight of steps descending to a lower garden of mixed flowers, fruits and vegetables. As regards the interior, the annexed plan of the ground floor will explain itself without much description, especially as an illustration of the main living-room is also given. The conception of the plan tends towards a reversion to the house-place of old-time dwellings of moderate size, such as Gervase Markham figured and described in James I.'s time. There are, indeed, at Amberley an entrance or vestibule and a dining-room; but the main feature is the room which occupies the whole east end of the house. It is in two sections on different levels. The lower one is 25ft. long, if we include the chimney excrescence. It is principally lit by a five-light casement window to the south. Its north side is open to the upper section, which is balustraded off except where three steps give access to it. At the back of this section rises the main stairway, while an ample,

a most pleasant one to live in, though there are some who would prefer the additional privacy of the stairs



Copyright.

THE LIVING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

opening from the vestibule. This is a matter for individual feeling. Certainly the present arrangement is the more picturesque, and this stair is only meant for the use of the occupiers of the room out of which it rises, as there are back stairs at the other end of the house. The main stairway, moreover, is shut off at its summit by a door which opens on to a gallery 30ft. long and 10ft. wide, having a great bay window over the front door and a fireplace opposite to this feature. It therefore fulfils the function of an additional sitting-room, and also affords an air of spaciousness to the upper floor. From it the four principal bedrooms are entered. Through an arched opening at its west end a cross passage is reached leading to the ample bathroom and the well-contrived hot-linen closet, housemaid's accommodation, etc. Here, too, are the back stairs rising from the kitchen and continuing up to the attic bedrooms. The interior finish is very

simple, but entirely pleasing. The plain but well-proportioned panelling, doors and chimney-pieces are kept white, and above them the walls and ceilings are washed white also, the latter being occasionally broken and relieved by old oak beams. The furniture, the china, the pictures, the implements are also in many cases old and in all cases are well chosen with precise reference to the character of the rooms and to the effect desired. The designer certainly does himself no more than justice when he declares that "the interior of the little place proves, to my mind, that it is possible to secure what are commonly called 'modern requirements' and yet retain the simple beauty and dignity of 16th and 17th century work." There is a most happy conjunction of the old and the new. The spirit of the past is here, yet rigid archaism and self-conscious eccentricity are wholly avoided. It is a home to satisfy thoroughly the healthy body and the perceptive mind. H. AVRAY TIPPING.

IN THE GARDEN.

SOME RARE AND BEAUTIFUL TREES AND SHRUBS.

THE name Rose Acacia is popularly applied to a pretty species of Robinia of shrubby character, notable on account of its handsome rose-coloured flowers, which are as large as those of a culinary Pea, and the way in which its branches are clothed with stiff hairs. Planted in light ground it forms a thicket of growths 6ft. to 12ft. high. Unfortunately, the branches are brittle and easily broken by wind; consequently it can only be grown satisfactorily in sheltered situations. A peculiarity about the species is its apparent inability to produce seeds, for in a state of cultivation seeds are never met with, while in a state of Nature very few seed-pods have been observed. Although it is sometimes grafted on stocks of Robinia Pseudacacia, it can be readily increased by means of root-cuttings. To effect this, roots a little thicker than a lead pencil should be cut into lengths 3in. to 4in. long, and inserted singly in pots of sandy soil in a propagating case in spring. As soon as young roots have formed and a growing shoot is seen, they should be hardened off ready for nursery quarters. Pretty, however, as the type is, it is surpassed in general beauty by the variety known as *inermis* or *macrophylla*. This is easily recognised by its hairless leaves and branches, while it has larger foliage and inflorescences, with correspondingly larger and richer-coloured flowers. It is often grafted on short stems of Robinia Pseudacacia, and forms an excellent subject for a sheltered position on a lawn. It ought, however, to be securely staked. Another use for the latter plant is forcing, for it is an excellent subject for the greenhouse in March.

Where a place on a south, east, or west wall can be given to a choice shrub, select the Coroea, for it is comparatively rare, of neat appearance, pretty when in flower and interesting. Except in the most favoured parts of the country it is doubtful whether it would thrive in the open ground; but a wall will be found sufficient protection for it in all except the very coldest parts of the country. It is a native of New Zealand and is distributed along the greater part of the Eastern Coasts of the North and Middle Islands. Left to grow naturally, it assumes the form of a dense shrub with tortuous, woody branches. The leaves vary considerably in size and shape, some being almost round, others heart-shaped, some oval and so on. The flowers are star-shaped, yellow and borne in profusion during May. It stands cutting back well and may be kept fairly close to the wall with a little trouble. It can also be grown in pots in a sunny greenhouse; but to obtain good results from this method of culture the plants ought to be plunged out in the open air for the summer months. Ordinary garden soil suits it, and cuttings of half-ripe shoots may be rooted during summer.

Although the *Fremontia californica* is by no means a new shrub, it is comparatively rare in gardens, for it is in most places a short-lived plant. Unfortunately, it has the curious habit of dying quite suddenly, and when to all intents and purposes it is perfectly healthy and full of vigour one day, it may show signs of ill-health by the flagging of the leaves the next, and in a few days' time be quite dead. Fortunately, however, it is a quick-growing plant, and another example of flowering size may soon be obtained. It is one of those shrubs that are almost hardy but require a little protection at certain periods. In the warmer parts of the country it may safely be planted against a south or west wall, while in a few cases it will doubtless succeed in an open border. In a recess near the south end of the Temperate House at Kew a fine plant quite 15ft. in height has passed through the recent trying winter unharmed. It has, however, been well sheltered from the east and north, while a little protection has also probably been afforded by heat escaping from the house. This *Fremontia* is found on dry hills about the foot of the Southern Sierra Nevada and other places, where it forms a tree up to 20ft. in height, with a trunk sometimes 1ft. in diameter. The leaves are evergreen,

the flowers golden in colour, 2in. to 3in. across, and borne from axillary buds. The plant is closely related to the renowned Hand Plant (*Cheirostemon platanoides*) of Mexico, which has rarely bloomed in this country. To succeed with the *Fremontia*, rich soil ought not to be given.

Several ornamental species of *Viburnum* are included among recent introductions from China, *V. rhytidophyllum* being of the number. It is quite distinct from any other species in cultivation, its chief characteristic being apparent in the long, peculiarly veined leaves. Mr. Wilson obtained seeds for Messrs. Veitch from Central China, and the plant was put into commerce about two years ago. Exhibits of large specimens have been made on several occasions. It shows every appearance of forming a large bush, growth being vigorous and free. The evergreen leaves are from 6in. to 9in. in length and from 2in. to 3in. wide, yellowish green, curiously wrinkled on the upper surface and covered with a yellowish brown tomentum beneath. This tomentum is peculiar to the plant, for the young wood and leg-stalks are also clothed with it. The flowers are in large, terminal, flattened heads, cream or whitish in colour and succeeded by quantities of fruit, which possess a similar character to that of our common *V. Lantana*, the Wayfaring Tree, that is, of being bright red and black at various periods of the ripening stage, and not unfrequently heads of fruits combine the two colours. *V. rhytidophyllum* thrives in ordinary garden soil quite as well as the *Laurustinus*, and will doubtless become a popular shrub in the near future.

Cytisus sessilifolius is a Broom that can be recommended for extended cultivation on account of its rich colour and lateness of flowering. The name of *sessilifolius* is not a happy one, for though many of the leaves may be sessile, or nearly so, those on the lower parts of the branches frequently have stalks a quarter of an inch long. There is, however, no difficulty in distinguishing the species among others, the whole plant being glabrous and the lower lobes of the upper leaves being so arranged that they appear to clasp the branch. The flowers are golden in colour and produced in terminal racemes from short shoots of the current year's growth during late May and June. It is not easy to increase from cuttings, though they may be rooted in a cold frame; but seeds set freely and germinate without trouble, so there need be no difficulty in working up a stock. The species is a native of Southern Europe. W. D.

THE WISTARIAS.

ONE of the most beautiful pictures in the garden this spring has been created by the Wistarias. The trails of lavender flowers to the ordinary observer are familiar; that is the kind we call *Wistaria sinensis*, but other species are now coming into favour. The *Wistaria* of Japan figured and described in the many books is not the *Wistaria* we see on many house fronts; it is *Wistaria multijuga*, happily coming now into cultivation in this country. There is also the white *Wistaria*, but this has an unfortunate characteristic—it does not flower with the same freedom as the other. Wistarias are climbing shrubs (if one may use such a term) of extraordinary beauty. One only wishes they would grow with the same freedom as the Virginia Creeper.

THE ROSE GARDEN AT KEW.

A modern development in Rose culture has been to bring the sweetest of all flowers into the garden itself. One is not thinking now of the bush or standard plants, but of the ramblers that supply colour and fragrance in the woodland. An illustration of this may be seen at the present moment in the Royal Gardens at Kew. There what used to be a gravel-pit is now flooded with flowers, the old Roses Dorothy Perkins and Crimson Rambler making garlands of blossom such as has never been seen before, and this gardening is gardening in the truest sense of the word and simple gardening, inexpensive, and showing a new phase of Rose cultivation. It is a pleasure when one visits the Rose shows that are being held now throughout England to see the great attention that has been paid to the varieties outside the exhibition stage. It is a matter of Roses—Roses in our gardens, over the pergola, arch and wherever they can cling to. We want both. One

wishes for the perfect form of the exhibition Rose, because nothing creates a greater rivalry than exhibitions, and this is the work that the National Rose Society has done and is doing in having an annual tournament of flowers, which creates great interest in the kinds which do not appeal to those who simply show for exhibition.

THE BANKSIAN ROSE.

In gardens where this charming Rose thrives, it is very beautiful during the latter half of May and June when covered with its yellow flowers. Unfortunately, it is a rather fastidious and not very hardy plant, and cannot be depended on to do its best in all gardens. In the neighbourhood of London it is occasionally found in good condition, but more frequently it is a failure for the outdoor garden. From ten to fifteen years ago, when Wimbledon House, on the borders of Wimbledon Common, was in existence, the outside pillars of a range of plant-houses were covered with this Rose, and it did remarkably well, blooming freely annually; while in other gardens a few miles distant it was disappointing. In the Royal Gardens, Kew, a large plant in the Temperate House blooms freely, but it has not proved a success so far as flowers



MEADOW COTTAGE: GARDEN FRONT.

are concerned out of doors, though a large specimen may be seen on No. 2 Museum. During the last week of May several exceptionally fine, well-flowered examples were noticed on walls at Lord Clinton's Stevenstone estate in North Devon. These specimens were from 15 ft. to 20 ft. in height, covering a considerable area, and were a mass of flowers. In the neighbourhood of Swansea numerous specimens of this Rose also exist, the climate there being very similar to that of Devon. The Banksian Rose, *R. Banksie*, is a Chinese plant named in honour of Lady Banks. It is recognised by means of its spineless shoots, glossy leaves and trusses of tiny double flowers. A variety with white flowers is known, while the flowers of the type differ in shade, some being pale yellow and others deep yellow. Cuttings of young shoots root readily in summer. For the Southern Counties it is well worth trying in a sunny position on a warm wall, but it is not often that positions further North can be found to suit it.

W. D.

LITERATURE.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

MR. P. J. S. PERCEVAL has discovered a fine opening for a book in *London's Forest* (Dent and Co.) It is true that there are two books on Epping Forest already in existence, each of which is excellent in its own way. The late Mr. R. Fisher wrote a learned book on the "Forest of Essex," which is likely to remain for a long time the standard work of reference, but those who admire it most will willingly admit that it is far from being an entertaining book. It is an authority to consult, not a volume to read for pleasure. Mr. Edward North Buxton's "Epping Forest," on the other hand, is just what it pretends to be—a guide-book, though probably it is one of the very best guide-books ever written. It is the kind of volume to put in your coat pocket when exploring Epping Forest. Its information is always correct, and as a guide to the best walks, the notable things to see in the Forest, its fauna and flora, it leaves little to be desired. Mr. Perceval's book does not come into competition with either of these. It is a wide survey of the customs connected with the Forest, its history, traditions and romance. Every page of it is readable, and it teems with information for which the author has evidently searched long and successfully. The subject is well worthy the trouble taken with it, for as Mr. Perceval says:

Epping Forest is not a London County Council park, whose natural features are preserved with metalled roads and gravelled paths to make easy the way of recreators. It is what it claims to be—a forest; a strip of wild woodland, whose paths, but trodden tracks, lose themselves in a maze of wanderings, now amid the groves, now through heath and bracken fern, now through the moist beds of tiny rivulets, to discover pool and pond.

In a very few words he sketches the character of the woodland. The pollarded hornbeams that grow on hill and dale and in the fantastic shapes that decay has lent them, present a historical object lesson in regard to the right of lopping once so tenaciously held by commoners. Very fine beeches grow in the neighbourhood of High Beach, though it is a popular misconception that they gave the name to the place. It is not the high beech tree, but the high beach. Of oaks there are not so many, though there are one or two good groves, a few fine examples of oak timber, and one aged giant which still stands like a feudal ruin marking the spot where the London citizens used to assemble for their Easter hunt. It has always seemed to us a pity that Fairmead Lodge, which used to stand opposite it, has been removed. Tradition says that it was used as a stand, or, as the antiquarians have it, "standing," wherefrom royal personages could view the hunt. Of late years it has been converted into a tea-garden, and shows little of its former dignity. Other trees are the old

crab apples, which seem to have been originally planted for the benefit of the deer, hawthorn and blackthorn, which have grown into immense thickets rendered more dense by the clambering wild rose and the bramble, and combining to form impenetrable sanctuaries for the jay and other stealthy birds. There are several beautiful groves of holly and a number of varieties of the willow. Mr. Perceval says that the city flower vendor has nearly stripped the Forest of flowering plants, but this statement is a rather strong one. Those who know where to look can still find plenty of flowers in it. The violets creep over it in great hosts; there are huge stretches of bluebells; the primrose still finds a home, though its numbers are sadly diminished; and in open places there are cowslips, harebells, heath and other English wild flowers. The sundew still shows its red spot in the marshy grass. Its fauna has actually increased both in variety and numbers since the Forest became the property of the people. It is difficult to keep the fallow deer and the roe deer within due limits. They roam almost from Epping to Walthamstow, and landowners whose properties adjoin the Forest do not always regard their presence with the approval of the naturalist. The fox and the badger may be found dwelling together in amity in the neighbourhood of the Wake Arms, and the latter has formed other strongholds, and wanders far in his nocturnal hunts. Rabbits innumerable there are, and the hare seems to know that it has a sanctuary. It is characteristic of the Forest that shelter is afforded alike to the harmless rodent and the grim little carnivora. It is not uncommon to see the stoat in full chase after the rabbit, or to hear the squeal of the latter when the tiny bloodhound is finishing his work. The weasel, too, may often be witnessed chasing the mouse and snakes pursuing the frogs. Above in the tall beeches the squirrels cough and bark at the passer-by, or chase one another sportively from branch to branch. They often make their dreys so low that the schoolboy, regardless of bye-laws, can lay his hands on them. The hedgehog has increased so largely that he is a foe to all birds that nest on the ground, and these are very numerous. The wild pheasants do their own rearing, partridges find covert in the new plantations, and both the red-legged French and the English variety are frequently visible. There are many birds, including the nightingales that nest on the ground. Perhaps the most characteristic bird of the Forest is, however, the jay, whose pretty colours and ungraceful flight are familiar to every observer. The loud, wild cry of the yaffle resounds through the woodland depths, and his pretty colours often flash past one, while many a tree-trunk shows where he has chiselled out a hole

for his nest. On the brooks and ponds the brilliant flash of a kingfisher is often seen. Perhaps the most attractive bird to the naturalist is the hawfinch, which, sometimes rare elsewhere in Great Britain, here finds a home that seems to agree with him. He is a bird whose shy but interesting manners well repay observation. Those most charming of small birds, the tits and the wrens, are in prodigious numbers and in considerable variety; the tiny goldcrest on the higher stretches of forest and the common wren in the lower are very common. The great tit, the blue tit, the long-tailed tit are insectivorous, and probably flourish here so well owing to the quantities of insects they find in the decaying horn-beams. Mr. Perceval, however, deals lightly and pleasantly with ornithology and entomology; he is more interested in the human romance connected with the Forest. He loves the story of the city magnate who knew so little about the hare he was hunting that on the cry of "A hare! a hare!"

With set lips and knitted brow his gallant lordship advanced with drawn sword to meet the oncoming of the supposed enemy. With a flourish of his weapon he bravely cried: "Let him come! let him come! I thank my God I fear him not!"

His account of a civic hunt is a delightful piece of reading, but it ought to have been supplemented by an account of modern poaching. Round about the Forest of to-day there linger characters who are as curious and individual as any of those which tradition or history has handed down. They would have compared with "Tommy," at one time chief huntsman to Long-Pole-Wellesley, the Lord Warden of the Forest, of whom Thomas Hood gave the well-known description:

A snow-white head, a merry eye,
A cheek of jolly blush;
A claret tint laid on by health
With Master Reynard's brush.

A hearty frame, a courteous bow,
The prince he learned it from;
His age about three-score-and-ten,
And there you have Old Tom.

We like that description, by Dugdale, in the chapter on "Sporting Ecclesiastics" of the Dean and Chapter "appalled in copes and proper vestments, with garlands of roses on their heads," waiting for the deer provided by the De Baud family and taken in the Forest of Essex. The antiquary will find something to interest him in the chapter on the "Forest Marshes" and the pasture right. Here are some of the old regulations: "Commoners' cattle were ordered to be withdrawn during the fence month, the fifteen days before and after Old Midsummer Day, when the Forest was sacred to the deer and their newly-born fawns." "The Forest Courts in 1769 had to deal with certain offenders of Nazeing who had rescued from the village pound 21 horned beasts of the Cow Kind." "In the marshes of Waltham cows were not permitted to remain out at night, but were to be driven home at the driving hour from Old Lady Day to Old Lammas Day, and not turned upon the marsh again before four o'clock in the morning." The connection of Robin Hood with the Forest is not very generally known. There are an inn and a cave named after him. It would appear that his real connection with the Forest rose from his offering protection to the Lady Matilda, daughter of Lord Fitzwalter, when she was unprotected at Dunmow. Tradition goes so far as to say that she married Robin and became the "Maid Marian," Queen of the May. Dick Turpin is much more closely associated with the Forest, though his historical ride to York was an invention of the novelist. The name Turpin occurs on tombstones in Chigwell Churchyard, he is claimed to have been a native of it, and he did really belong to the Forest district, as he is said to have been born near Thaxted, and in early life joined a band of deer-stealers, called the Gregory Gang, in the Forest. He became their leader, and undoubtedly performed some extraordinary feats when he was on the "high Toby." He was very nearly captured in the Forest, but escaped, though not before shooting one of his companions in the confusion, got as far as York and became notorious as a sheep-stealer, for which offence he was duly hanged in 1739. In the days when highwaymen flourished, the Forest continued to be a great hiding-place for them, and once a bold attempt was made to capture King William III. when he was journeying past the Forest on his way to Newmarket, and in the reign of George I. cavalry had to patrol the highway between Waltham and Hackney every evening to safeguard travellers on the road.

THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY.

Sonnets, by Lord Alfred Douglas. (Academy Publishing Company.)

LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS has given us his new sonnets most beautifully printed on perfect paper between elegant grey covers by the Academy Publishing Company. It is a very slight volume, with only the same number of poems as there are lines in the sonnet, and Lord Alfred is to be congratulated on the whole for the selection he has made. Although he never uses

Shakespeare's sonnet form, his manner is very reminiscent of Shakespeare. He has looked long and deeply into that magic mirror where we fancy the great poet revealed his inner history. Lines such as

Alas! that Time should war against Distress
And numb the sweet ache of remembered loss

seem to have but one genesis; and yet how false the emotion and how forced the passion when compared with Wordsworth when he begins that cry of regret:

Surprized by joy—impatient as the wind—
I turn'd to share the transport—O with whom.

Or the infinite sadness in that sonnet of Shakespeare's, when

He weeps afresh love's long since cancelled woe.

The same sonnet speaks of

Thoughts like restless waves that toss
On the wild sea's intemperate wilderness.

Although "lovely and more temperate" is an excellent phrase in the hands of Shakespeare, surely "the wild sea's intemperate wilderness" is a redundant, silly conceit. Lord Alfred Douglas, who is a genuine and recognised poet, ought not to spoil his gift with such vain phantasies as "sheer children," "the ravished ivory gate" and "unravished silences." We guess what he means by "sheer," but the word is ugly, abrupt and unpoetical in the present instance. Of course, "ravished" may be a telling word, but why use it too often? It only reminds by painful comparison of the magnificent ode of Keats. The sonnet "To Olive" is fine, but it is far too full of Shakespearian phrases and transcriptions. We think Lord Alfred Douglas has succeeded best in that sweetest sonnet which closes with

I see you all bedecked in bows of rain
New showers of rain against new risen suns
New tears against new light of shining joy.
My youth, equipped to go, turns back again,
Throws down its heavy pack of years and runs
Back to the golden house a golden boy.

Another thing must be noticed in regard to Lord Alfred Douglas's language, and that is his continual use of pretty and poetical words. In fourteen short poems it suggests poverty of thought, for, of course, it is that which contracts vocabulary, when he uses the words "gold" and "golden" nine times, and the words "sweet" and "sweetest" ten times. No doubt they are favourite words in the sonnets of Shakespeare, but gold or golden belong to his best-remembered phrases, and do not come under any pretty poetical definition. Take "Often is his gold complexion dimmed," or "Golden lads and girls," or "Kissing with golden face the meadows green," and we feel the adjective is the only and perfect word. With the exception of the verse just quoted, Lord Alfred Douglas turns the gold into tinsel. The finest effects in poetry have been achieved not by the deliriously sweet or exaggerated and fancy expressions, but by the simplest combinations of words—at least, it seems a simple combination often. Such intense phrases as "a harlot's paradise," "they moan on muted strings," "my soul's summer days," "eternal mourning dress," "pale violet ways," "wan roads and misty time-trod ways" mean nothing to the heart and nothing to the intellect.

Fear no more the heat o' the sun
Nor the furious winter's rages
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages
Golden lads and girls all must
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

In that verse, the most poignant and sincere, perhaps, in English poetry, there is not one word that might not be called commonplace, words such as we use every day, words to be found in the peasant's vocabulary; every one of them. The only word that savours of poetry is "golden," and its introduction here brings romance and youth and passion into the sadness of mortality. Or set against the counterfeit grief in any of the lines of Lord Alfred Douglas we have quoted the line,

Thou hast finished joy and moan

and there we see "sorrow barricaded evermore" in the hearts of a suffering race of men. It seems so difficult for the poet who is talented, but not consummate, to realise the virtues of extreme simplicity of emotion. Coleridge made a perfect utterance in what seems a nursery rhyme:

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made an' loveth all.

It would be a miracle if Lord Alfred Douglas could simplify and chasten his sense of poetry, and yet if he could he and we should be gainers. Tennyson was an artist so much the greater because he kept the thought till all the smoke and unnecessary violence of the fire was cleared away and nothing but the pure spirit stayed. He did not always write so simply as the following verse; but all his best remembered lines are of the same clearness and purity of language:

Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

Instead of beginning a poem with inchoate and unpoetical violence like this:

This is deep hell, to be expressionless,
To leave emotion inarticulate.

which has in it only the tragedy of the actor's stride; tragedy, too, of the type of the Infant Prodigy's father. Tennyson begins a consummate lament:

Break, break, break
On thy cold grey stones O sea
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

Of course, it may be contended that this is lyrical poetry in opposition to the set and stately form of the sonnet; but, then, Shakespeare can begin his lament poetically:

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry.

With all this we are glad to praise Lord Alfred Douglas where he expresses himself without torture and strain, and were he less a poet we should be less

troubled at his faults of redundancy and exotic sentiment. Lord Alfred Douglas would do well to read the works of his great countrymen, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns, and from them he would learn the lessons—Nature teaches her true sons, be they poets or peasants or peers—sincerity, simplicity and genuine passion.

BOOKS TO ORDER FROM THE LIBRARY.

Laurus Nobilis: Chapters on Art and Life, by Vernon Lee. (John Lane.)
Everybody's Secret, by Dion Clayton Calthrop. (Alston Rivers.)
The King in Yellow, by Robert W. Chambers. (Constable.)
Sister Teresa (new version), by George Morse. (T. Fisher Unwin.)
The Red Rose of a Summer, by Louise Mack. (Alston Rivers.)
Tyrol and Its People, by Clive Holland. (Methuen.)

["NOVELS OF THE WEEK" ARE REVIEWED ON PAGE LXXXIV.]

THE PONIES OF THE ALL-ENGLAND TEAM.

IT is certain that all the good ponies are not in the possession of the Meadowbrook team. For my own part I have never thought this; and if anyone supposed that the American players had skimmed the cream off the polo market, the portraits which illustrate this article will no doubt serve to reassure their minds. Of the ponies in the All-England team eight are selected for portraiture, not because they are necessarily the best, but because of some especial interest attaching to them at the present time. It will be interesting to lovers of ponies to compare this series of portraits with those of the Meadowbrook team which appeared recently in these pages. The artist has so taken the pictures that they enable us to see the pony as if the animal itself, with all its character, its qualities and its defects, were before us. It will be convenient to take the ponies in the order of the position of their rider in the team, beginning with those to be ridden by Captain Herbert Wilson. This player is riding his own ponies, and this enables me to begin with one of the best-looking of the whole team and his owner's chief favourite. This pony is Grenadier, a grey, of the blood 14st. hunter type so eagerly looked for by polo players. He has a beautiful forehead, an intelligent and generous head, is well ribbed up and has a back and quarters which promise pace and the power to turn. His hocks are placed as they should be for a polo pony, and he looks, as indeed he is, a stayer and a model of handiness and pace. Of all positions in the game of polo No. 1 is the hardest to find ponies for. They must



W. A. Rouch

GRENADIER.

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be fast or the rider could not keep his place, be handy or the back will slip him, and easy to ride or the player may miss those critical strokes at goal which come in our modern game as often to No. 1 as to any. Miss Oaksey is second to Grenadier in the affections of her owner, but hardly inferior in those qualities which make a first-rate polo pony. She has great size and scope, a long sweeping stride, carries her saddle in the right place and has great depth of girth. One cannot help thinking what a brood mare she will make when her polo day is done, which for her owner's sake we may trust is a long time off. Rather of a different type from the others in Captain Wilson's stable is Marquis; but he, we are told, is but little behind his stable companions when it comes to the serious business of polo. Marquis is a somewhat plainer pony than the others, but is fast, quick and wiry, and has that alert and "varmint" look we see in so many good polo ponies.

Mr. Freake, too, is riding three of his own ponies and one lent by Mr. Miller. These are Sylvia, Swallow, Shipston and Silverton. I have picked out the portraits of Sylvia and Shipston for reproduction, the first because he is so good a pony and a favourite with his rider, and the other on account of his good looks. In modern polo the No. 2 needs a fast, smooth, galloping pony, from whose back the ball can be hit on the near or the off side. When galloping on the ball,



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MISS OAKSEY.

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SYLVIA.

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SCARLATINA.

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particularly if the ground is a little rough, the ball will, especially as it begins to lose momentum, twist or bend to one side or the other. Then the pony at a touch must alter its course without losing its stride, changing its legs or propping. One of the reasons why first-rate forwards are rare is that it is so hard to find ponies for them. Those who have seen Mr. Freake when galloping away for a run know what a pace he travels and how true is his stroke. Sylvia is the picture of a galloping light-weight pony—short in back, deep in the back ribs, powerful over the loins, with a light neck and forehand, easy pasterns and that look as of wire and steel which we desire in a polo pony, and withal docile and temperate in the game. Whatever else a polo pony does, it must not pull, or it is useless. Swallow is another pony of the same stamp, with marvellous springy paces, a beautiful forehand, and hocks on which she can turn and spring off in a moment into her stride again. The other picture from Mr. Freake's stud is Shipston. I have chosen her for her good looks, for of her performances I know nothing. She has a most sensible head and carries her saddle behind well-laid shoulders, so that the rider sits in the right place on her back—no small advantage to a polo player. Her forehand is excellent, and the slight droop of her quarters suggests her Irish origin, and, indeed, she greatly resembles an excellent stamp of well-bred Irish hunter. If Mr. Freake wants another he is to have Mr. C. D. Miller's Silverton. This pony has not, to look at, so much quality as some of the others; but he is a rare stayer, with a great deal of substance and bone and a turn of speed when it comes to a pinch. It will be seen then that, as regards our forward players, it will be no want of ponies that will hinder them from attacking.

We now come to No. 3, Mr. Pattison Nickalls. This fine Oxford player has his own famous old Blue Sleeves. Of this great mare I have an excellent portrait. Did any polo pony ever have such short cannon bone and long forearms! and the result is that a marvellous stride and extraordinarily powerful quarters are hers, and as from the knee to the ground, so from the hock, she is wonderfully short. What she does not know about polo is not worth knowing, and she has a resolute style of galloping on the ball. Mr. Nickalls is so fine a horseman that, as we know from watching him in the show-ring, he makes the best of his ponies. But in Mr. Bullivant's Scarlatina he has the loan of a rare stamp of blood pony. Where he finds them I do not know, but during his polo career Mr. Bullivant has had an extraordinary succession of good ponies and all full of quality. Scarlatina, like the rest, shows blood in her make and shape, and at once suggests the idea of sense, pace and, above all, an easy ride and plenty of staying power. Certainly Mr. Bullivant has done well to lend her, and the committee made no mistake in accepting the loan. We turn to Captain F. Guest's The Old Grey with especial interest. This was the first pony offered unconditionally by his owner for the use of the All-England team. He is a pony of proven usefulness.

If some polo ponies are the poetry of equine make and shape, The Old Grey is the prose, steady, clever, with plenty of substance, a pony to trust in a closely-fought ten minutes, and with a length of stride that gives him pace, and solid substance to stand a bump or two when Mr. P. Nickalls is hustling a game, at which his length, activity and horsemanship make him an adept. Lastly, we come to Mr. Miller and the famous Irish pony Patience, lent by Mr. Watts. A back pony must have two qualities—he must turn sharply and start quickly when the goal is in danger, and when that has, by the skill of his rider, been averted, he must be able, especially if Mr. C. Miller is riding him, to stride away right up into the game, and racing along the opening made by the other players, who are now each riding off his man, keep clear of the pursuing No. 1. They know Patience well in Ireland, where a first-rate pony has many judicious admirers among all classes.

It may be confidently said, I think, that our team will lack no element of success in their ponies. If they are beaten—*Absit omen*—it will be on their merits and by a team of fine players to whom we shall not grudge success if they earn it, as they well may. In the meantime, our ponies and men will do their very best—and we know what that is—to hold the supremacy of polo. One thing we are certain of after last Saturday—that they can play a losing game with unflinching pluck and resolution. On Saturday men

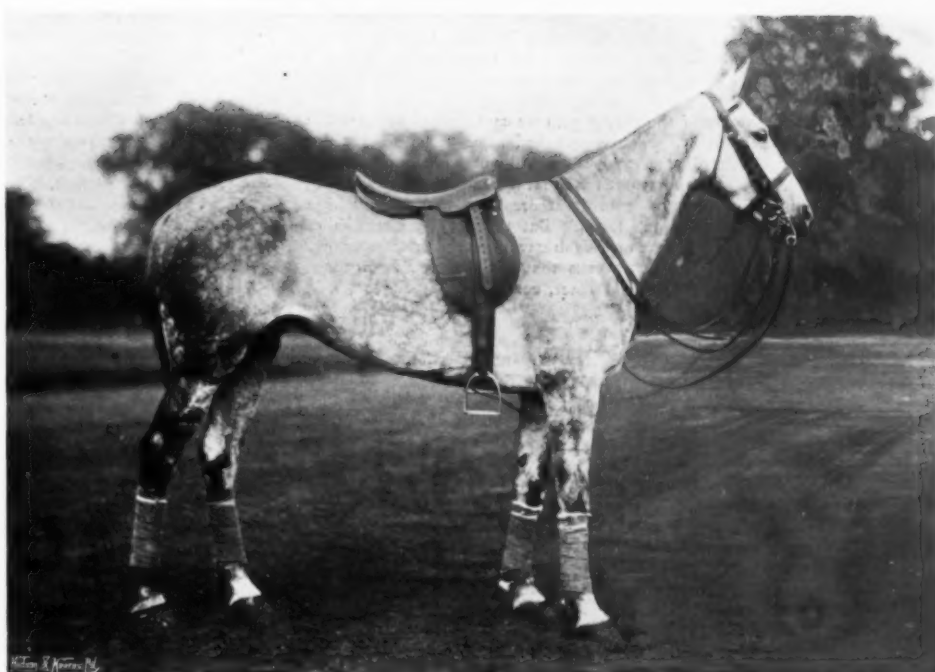
and ponies were worn out before the end, but to the very last they did their best with unfailing courage. No regimental team could have done better in this respect, and this, as those who have followed Service polo know, is no slight thing to say. X.

"MALTSTER."

IT is a pigeon pie that is responsible for what is here set down—a pigeon pie seen for a passing moment in the window of a Cheapside shop. Great is the power of association; for the sight of that delicacy, its shining crust of shaded brown adorned with pink and slender feet, carried us back across—well, never mind how many years, transported us into a sleepy country town, and to a quiet house with wide, low-ceilinged rooms. Before us rose again a double-chinned, clean-shaven face, a portly figure clad in buckskin breeches and top-boots, snuff-brown coat and frilled shirt front; and in our ears there sounded, in a woman's soft, cooing tones, the words, half coaxing, half imperative, "Come, Maltster, come!"

To us and to the little world through which his long life moved, the portly person in the snuff-brown coat was Mr. P.; but to his wife, plump and soft-hearted as himself, he was just "Maltster"—nothing more. The title came from the first and more important portion of his trade, which centred in the malting-floor that stretched beside the house. Six miles away, lying in the morning shadow of the great hill that looked down upon the town, there was a farm as well, of which a bailiff had the care. Both farm and malting-floor had more than paid their way for many a year, and in the little town the maltster was reputed a "snug" man.

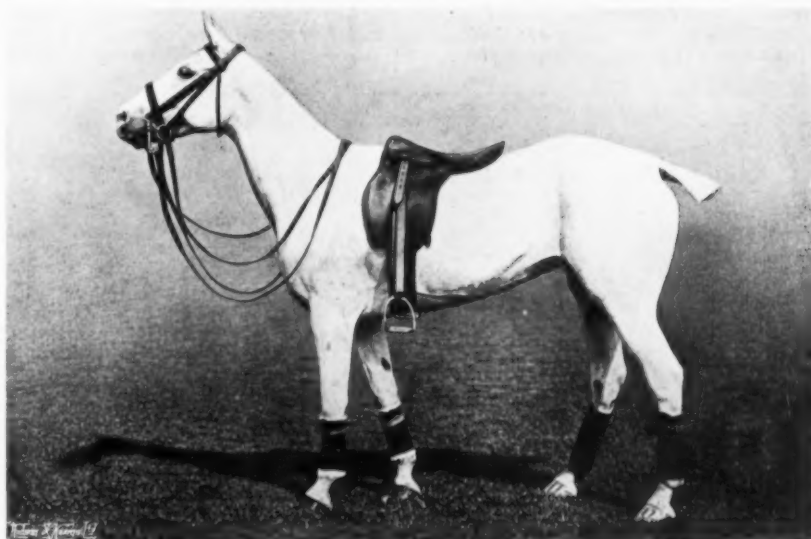
He made no show, and took no public part in local life; but no one got a more respectful greeting from the rector, or—still better sign—from the old lawyer in the square. The maltster and his wife were childless, a fact that without doubt had helped to fill his purse. She and her single maid and



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THE OLD GREY.

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BLUE SLEEVES.

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cat; her husband, and old Blucher, the Newfoundland dog—these were the only dwellers in the house beside the malting-floor. The "floor" and the one horse which served the maltster for his journeys to the farm were tended by old "Bydy," a much-bent and crusty-tempered man, whose uncontracted name of Bytheway was known to few and used by none.

But if the maltster and his wife were childless, yet well the old house knew the sound of little feet. For, like a far more famous family, we, only a step across the street, "were seven," and there was no day nor hour when all or any of us were not more than welcome in the maltster's house. For us the dear old lady spent long hours in her kitchen making cakes, for us she brewed cowslip and ginger wine. Ours were the Orleans plums, ours the walnuts from the great tree in the centre of the yard. The malting-floor, when empty, formed a playroom of a spaciousness unmatched in these degenerate days; and festivals in our honour called the strutting pigeons from the yard to fill the famous pies.

For periodical visits to the hillside farm the maltster used a solidly-built gig, drawn by a horse which seemed, even in motion, to enjoy uninterrupted and profound repose. As we have said, the maltster and his wife were stout, and when they were once side by side on the green-cushioned seat, the problem of introducing a third person between them seemed hopeless. Yet it was done, and that frequently, granted fine weather and a holiday. It took, indeed, some little time and shaking down before the third small passenger came into actual contact with the seat itself; for the first mile or so we hung suspended, held up by the two portly bodies between which we rode. When at last really seated we must have been almost out of sight, extinguished and obliterated on one side by ample folds of velvet mantle or of Paisley shawl, while on the right the maltster's elbow poked us, not in the ribs indeed, but in the middle of the chest, or even, as he jerked the reins with clockwork regularity, would chuck us underneath the chin. It



W. A. Rouch.

PATIENCE.

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was only this question of seating accommodation that limited the number that were wont to ride; the matter of load was of small moment to the horse, who, unless we do him wrong, was not unacquainted with the plough and other fieldwork, and who, moreover, never moved at any pace beyond the gentlest trot.

Of the plump fashioner of the pigeon pies we cannot even now recall a single fault. But we do know, perhaps even had some inkling of it then, that "Maltster" was reputed "near." We would not have the kind old man misunderstood. You could not put too great a company—especially of children—round his well-spread table; be it at breakfast, dinner, or "high tea," you could not eat and drink too much. But the actual extraction of good gold or silver from his cash-box or his fob gave him a momentary pang. It was on occasions of such unexpected calls that his old wife's soft tones were heard in the imperative, "Come, Maltster, come."

There came a day of payment when those tones were not at hand to chide him gently as of old. His wife lay ill upstairs in a four-poster bed the size of a small room and a physician had been summoned in consultation from the neighbouring county town. The visit over and the husband's anxious fears in part allayed, the family doctor whispered that the physician would expect his fee before he left. "Maltster" enquired the amount; the sum was named in guineas—three, or maybe five. Drawing a handful of coins from his breeches pocket he slowly counted down the needed sovereigns on the table; then hesitated, glancing at the shillings in his hand. Even in that moment of relief the ruling passion was still strong. "Pounds 'll do, I daresay, Doctor?" For the amused physician pounds "did" very well; but, though we hardly think the old man gave himself away, the tale leaked out, and "Maltster's" shrewdness got him into trouble with his wife.

ARTHUR O. COOKE.

ON THE GREEN.

EDITED BY HORACE HUTCHINSON.

TAYLOR AT LA BOULIE.

TAYLOR, it is clear, like other men of less distinction, must be beginning to accept it as a good omen if he starts playing below his proper form in a competition. He could not get things to go quite right for him in the first nine holes of the open championship, yet after that they went so right that it may be said nothing ever went wrong again. Then at La Boulie, starting for the

French championship, of which he was at the very moment holder, he did the first hole, a not impossible three, in six. Thereafter his play must have been as nearly faultless as can be. Starting on the second day three strokes behind Braid, he gradually overhauled that great man, and finished ahead of him by a single stroke. The effort was a very remarkable one, and Taylor is now holder of our own open championship, the French championship for the second time in succession, and incidentally has won such trifles as the Cruden Bay Tournament, and is also the present keeper of all the glory accruing from winning the *News of the World* prize, although that is a story of the autumn of last year. Still, it counts.

SOME POINTS IN THE FRENCH CHAMPIONSHIP.

It was wonderful that Dangé, Massy's assistant, should have equalled Braid's leading score on the first day; less wonderful that he should not keep up his form on the second day. He had one bad round, which knocked him out of his pride of place, and the same tale is to be told of Johns, who yet showed that his fine play in the championship at Deal was no passing spasm. The truth is that this second day at La Boulie seems to have been one of searching winds, which found out the weak joints in the harness. Therefore it set a distance between the first and the last, and the three great men were together at the head of the list—Taylor, Braid and Vardon, in this order—and the rest not "nowhere," but with a decent little interval between. It seems quite certain that we must, for the moment at least, concede to Taylor that he is a little better man at score play than any other, yet we have a conviction that, if a big match over several greens were set in array between him and Braid, the Scot would find more backers. Such a match would be glorious.

PLAY BY SCORE OR BY MATCH.

It is a curious thing that, while the fight between the admirers of score play and those who think that the match is much the finer form

and test of the game continues to rage furiously, the devotees of the match play have never so far as we have seen made use of a very formidable piece of logical artillery lying ready to their hand. As a rule the professionals are the chief supporters of the game by score; they say that "getting the figure" at each hole *must* be the better test. Perhaps there are a few amateurs who are with them, but very few indeed. The neglected piece of artillery is the following very obvious fact, that no matter what their views may be on the theory of this business, we never (it is a big word, but hardly too big to use in the connection), we virtually never, see two men, be they professional or amateur, going out to play a game of friendly golf together and deciding to see which of the two will make the better score. They play according to the defined fashion of playing the game—by holes. It never enters into their heads to play in any other way. Such a form of the game has no practical existence when two or three or four are gathered together.

It is only an expedient for reckoning the results of the comparative play of a large number occupying the course at the same time. That is the *raison d'être* of the scoring plan. But it is not the game of golf. That, as very clearly defined in the book of rules, is played quite differently.

CAPTAIN HUTCHISON FIRST.

The first competition for the *Golf Illustrated* Gold Vase attracted a fine big field to the Mid-Surrey course, and produced a great score by Captain Hutchison. To average 73 for two rounds of the course would be a fine enough performance for the best of the professionals, and its merits are very clearly shown by the fact that the winner was no less than seven strokes ahead of the second man, Mr. Harris, who did two good rounds of 77 and 76. Captain Hutchison's finest achievement was clearly his 35 for the home-coming nine holes in the afternoon. Thirty-six out is nothing super-human; it is very good and very steady, but a reasonably modest man can conceive himself doing it. Thirty-five home, however, is really abominably good; all the holes, save only the sixteenth, were perfectly played, and Captain Hutchison was a stroke better than he had any right to expect at both the eleventh and eighteenth, which he got in two and three respectively. Curiously enough, the only hole where he took a stroke too many, namely, the sixteenth, is certainly one of the easiest holes in the last nine—one might say the only really easy one.



MR. G. W. HILLYARD.

Captain Hutchison is almost certainly a better golfer now than he ever was before, and yet it would be hard to say where he has improved. It is hardly in his driving or his play with iron clubs, for that was always as good and accurate as could be. He certainly has been putting wonderfully well, and that was not always his strong point; but more important than either, he seems to be more sure of himself and to be playing with greater confidence. He will in all probability be a permanently improved player since Muirfield.

THE REST NOWHERE.

The winner's brilliant round cast all the others undeservedly into the shade. Besides the good score of Mr. Harris already mentioned, the total of 154 returned by Mr. Gillies and Mr. Cottam represents excellent golf, and there were many others close on the heels of these two, noticeably Mr. Apperley, a young Australian golfer who played in the amateur championship last year at Sandwich, but was just beaten by Mr. Rowan Shaw in the first round. It is rather curious that Mr. Fry, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Worthington did not do better, with their feet upon their native heath. Mr. Taylor was twice under 80, but only just under; Mr. Fry was 160 and Mr. Worthington a very long way down the list. Probably local knowledge is not of any vast assistance at the Old Deer Park. It is a straightforward course. The player can for the most part see where he is going, and the greens are so good and true and uniform in pace that the stranger should quickly feel at home on them. At the same time, as one watched Taylor winning the *News of the World* Tournament there last October, one felt that he did know the pace and the little runs and turns of the ground just the least bit better than other people. However, most amateurs who play much golf in the neighbourhood of London have at least a nodding acquaintance with Mid-Surrey, for there is probably more golf played over it day in and day out than over any other course in Great Britain.

THE SCOTTISH LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIP.

We read by the reports that it was "contrary to expectations" that Miss Kyle won the Scottish Ladies' Championship and defeated in the final Miss Dorothy Campbell, who lately won the championship of all the ladies. Possibly it is always "contrary to expectations" when Miss Campbell loses a match; but no one who knows the play of Miss Kyle will be astonished at her beating anybody. On the contrary, it has rather been a surprise to people at St. Andrews, who know what a splendid player and what a steady player Miss Kyle is, that she has not done better in the big events of the golfing year. She has now made the mark which was expected of her after playing so well, when still hardly more than a child, in the Ladies' Championship at St. Andrews a year or two ago. Her win over Miss Campbell was a fairly easy one, by three up and one to play.

THE ART OF STEALING BALLS

An ingenious method of making away with golf balls was brought to light the other day, when a boy was charged with stealing a ball on the Fulwell course. It appears that a crowd of boys hover about the boundaries of the course, and a ball is only likely to be recovered by the erring player should it be too old to be worth stealing. In this case the culprit, on being threatened with the terrors of the law, disclosed his secret, which consisted of a small hole in the ground wherein the ball could be hidden, and then covered over with a lid of turf. This simple device is probably not altogether new. On the days when golf was played on the old Cambridge links at Coldham Common there was always a band of urchins lining the banks of a singularly stagnant and muddy ditch that bordered the course. They did a thriving trade by retrieving balls and receiving salvage to the extent of a penny, or even twopence, but a brand-new ball had the unaccountable habit of being hopelessly lost. It was generally believed that the ball was merely stamped into the rich Cambridgeshire clay, but perhaps the ingenuity of the small boys was underrated, and they really had an underground cavern covered in, as at Fulwell, with a movable turf top.

A CANAL FOR ST. ANDREWS.

For dealing with the water, which has been a grave trouble lately in the bunkers at St. Andrews, an idea has been suggested which, though it sounds at first rather like a trifling with a very serious subject, really seems on further reflection to have much to recommend it. It is that a canal should be cut between the old and new courses, into which the bunker water might be drained. Whether the said canal should communicate by swing doors, which would shut automatically at the rising of a spring tide, with the burn, or have a separate outlet of its own seawards, or whether it would meet



MR. H. F. LAWFORD.

the needs of the case to leave it without outlet, for the purpose of receiving the water that would otherwise lodge in the bunkers, might be matters for later decision. In the main, the idea has a simplicity which commends it. The canal cut on the way to the "Suez Canal" hole at Sandwich did much to drain the neighbouring land. There is no need that it should be unsightly; it might be given graceful serpentine curves, and it would provide a dividing line, which is rather badly needed, between the two courses. The simplicity of the scheme is really, perhaps, the strongest reason why it is unlikely to find favour.

MR. G. W. HILLYARD.

There are few more versatile players of games than Mr. G. W. Hillyard, who is the secretary of the All-England Lawn Tennis Club and therefore in control of the championships at Wimbledon this week. As everyone knows, he is a very fine lawn tennis player, and was one of the English team who toured South Africa last winter. He has played cricket for both Leicestershire and Middlesex, and at golf, which he plays chiefly perhaps at Cannes and at his own home, Thorpe Satchville in Leicestershire, he is some way behind scratch. The South African lawn tennis team could turn out a very good golf team, consisting of Mr. Hillyard, Dr. Eaves and Mr. R. F. Doherty; and in the intervals of lawn tennis they played several golf matches. These they won for the most part, but found their masters at Port Elizabeth, where there is one Mr. Wynne, who learnt all his golf in South Africa, and who, Mr. Hillyard declares, is a very fine player indeed.

MR. H. F. LAWFORD.

Another very well-known golfing lawn tennis player is Mr. H. F. Lawford, whose fame in the eighties was second only to that of Mr. W. Renshaw. It was as long ago as 1878 that Mr. Lawford first played in a lawn tennis championship and won the third prize, but he had to wait till 1887 before he became champion. The obstacle in his way was always Mr. Renshaw, who proved invincible from 1881 to 1886. Mr. Lawford, however, was close upon his heels, and the record of the matches between

the two makes thrilling reading twenty years afterwards. As a golfer Mr. Lawford has never equalled his lawn tennis achievements, but he is a good and steady player, and especially a good putter. It will be seen that he adopts that which is sometimes alluded to as the "croquet mallet style." It is a style that is not particularly elegant, and does not find favour with the very straightest sect of the Pharisees; but from the point of view of execution it has a great deal to recommend it, and its votaries are usually much to be feared upon the green.

LAW AND THE LAND.

PUPPY walkers, to say nothing of Masters of Hounds and Hunt secretaries, may be pardoned if the decision in a recent case causes them to think there is still some truth in the old adage about the law being "a hass." When the Dogs Act, 1906, was passing through Parliament, it was said over and over again that the regulations which would be made under the Act for the control and identification of dogs would not extend to packs of foxhounds; and, accordingly, in the regulations there is always found an exemption in favour of any pack of hounds or any dog while being used for sporting purposes. The question soon arose, did this extend to exempt foxhound puppies while being "walked," and after several contradictory decisions of petty sessional courts, it was laid down in the case of *Burton v. Atkinson*, which was decided about a year ago, that the intention was to exempt from the regulations dogs belonging to a pack of hounds, and that puppies, registered and marked as belonging to a Hunt, were within the expression "a pack of hounds," even though being "walked" by persons other than the Master or the Hunt servants. But the other day came a decision which it seems hard to reconcile with the earlier one. A puppy registered in the Blankney Hunt which was being walked was found straying at night, and the "walker" was charged with a breach of the regulations relating to keeping dogs confined at night. He contended that the puppy belonged to the Hunt, and was, therefore, not within the scope of the regulations he was charged with infringing. For some reason or other, which it is not easy to understand from the scanty reports in the newspapers, the Justices convicted him, and the Divisional Court has upheld the conviction. Perhaps, when fuller reports are available, harassed "walkers" may be able to ascertain why the distinction has been made.

There has been quite a run on dog cases lately, and we may mention one other that seems to be of some interest to farmers and graziers. Before a farmer can obtain exemption from dog licence in respect of his sheepdogs he must obtain the consent of a court of petty sessions. A recent case shows that the justices must not bind themselves by rules which restrict the statutory right to exemption. A farmer, who had forty head of cattle and sixty sheep, and kept two dogs solely for their management, applied to petty sessions for the necessary consent. The magistrates, having made a rule only to allow one dog unless an applicant had at least 150 head of stock, refused the consent, and the High Court has just held that this refusal was unlawful, and has laid it down that when the justices are satisfied that the applicant is a farmer, and that the two dogs are honestly and only used for managing his cattle, they are bound to grant a consent to his being exempt from duty in respect of those two dogs.

Landowners who may be thinking of disposing of any part of their property as building land will be interested in a somewhat singular restrictive covenant case which came before the Court of Appeal a few days ago, and will sympathise with the unsuccessful plaintiff, who certainly on paper seemed to have an exceedingly good case for relief. The Lenton Hall Estate, near Nottingham, was being laid out as a building estate, and in 1904 the defendant in the case had purchased certain plots, and had covenanted, for

himself and his assigns with the vendor and his assigns, not to erect thereon any buildings other than private dwelling-houses of an approved style. Later in the year the vendor sold Lenton Hall itself, which ultimately passed to the present plaintiff in 1907, together with the benefit of all the covenants entered into by the purchasers of other portions of the estate. But in 1906 the defendant had granted a building lease of his plots to some builders, who commenced to erect buildings that infringed the covenant, and became bankrupt before completing them. The trustee in bankruptcy disclaimed the lease, and the defendant had to resume possession. When the plaintiff came upon the scene, he complained of the derelict and unsightly buildings that had been put up in breach of the covenant, and brought this action for a mandatory order on the defendant to pull them down. He failed to succeed. The defendant, of course, was not responsible for what the bankrupts had done or for the disclaimer of the lease; possession had, as it were, been thrust upon him against his will. Both Mr. Justice Eve and the Court of Appeal held that the restrictive covenant had been broken once and for all before the plaintiff purchased Lenton Hall, and that the conveyance to him of the benefits of the covenants did not extend to transfer a right of action for damages for old breaches. Persons buying land in process of development should be careful to see that the right of action for past breaches of restrictive covenants is properly assigned to them; it can be done quite easily, and this seems to be the moral pointed by *Powell v. Helmshley*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—My committee has seen the admirable letter by Mr. H. Avray Tipping which appeared in your issue of the 5th inst. It agrees with him in his condemnation of the proposed row of new buttresses along the south side of the cathedral, which would completely transform the present aspect of the building as seen from the south, and, in its opinion, there is grave doubt as to whether the buttresses would attain their object. They would require extensive foundations, which might easily interfere with the foundations of the existing wall, and they would throw additional weight on to the wall which they attempt to support. The committee's opinion is that no such drastic methods should be resorted to until it is found absolutely necessary, and that a new wide foundation should be put in under the aisle wall and the aisle wall tied back to the nave wall by a series of gun-metal bars with coupling boxes.—THACKERAY TURNER, Secretary to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

DATE-PALM FLOWERING IN THE OPEN IN DORSETSHIRE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It may interest your readers to hear that two date-palms have this year produced flowers in the open. These palms have been in the garden for, I believe, about twenty-five years, but have not until this year flowered. They are about 12ft. high.—F. W. CRICK, Litton Cheney Rectory, Dorchester.

A COUNTRY LIFE MORAL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In reply to Miss G. M. Godden's letter in your issue of June 5th, the print, "Keep Within Compass," was printed and sold by Carrington Bowles, No. 69, St. Paul's Churchyard, London. It was printed in colours, and the illustration given is one of a pair. The companion print is of a similar design, but the centre figure is a woman, well dressed, of the Georgian period. A "moral" story is illustrated by a small sketch at each angle of the print, differing in detail to that contained in your paper. The artist's name is not given, but the date is approximately correct. The two prints are in the possession of Mr. G. W. Gould, Chigwell Lodge, Chigwell, Essex. I do not think the compass indicates any Masonic origin.—H. W. LEWER.

THE WILLOW-WARBLER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—On June 12th I met with a nest of the willow-warbler built in a very unusual site, a description of which may be of interest to your readers. As most bird-lovers know, the semi-domed nest of this bird is usually made on the ground, among herbage or in coarse grass, and for several years in succession I have met with the nest in the same spot, under a dwarf blackberry bush on the bank of a rivulet. Mr. Charles Dixon, in his work on "Nests and Eggs of British Birds," says: "Very rarely it (the nest) may be met with at some distance from the ground. I once found a nest some 3ft. from the ground, resting on a stone jutting from an old wall, surrounded with ivy, and partly supported by the stem of a hawthorn sapling." The nest which I found is fixed between four stems of a privet bush branching from the crown, and is 12in. from the ground. The bush is growing on a bank under my garden wall. The nest of this sweet little warbler is one of very loose construction and, so, hardly adapted to the site in question; yet, looking at it, one would imagine that the birds had made an extra effort in elaboration, for it is a very neatly rounded-off little abode.—CHARLES F. HENDERSON.

ELM BLOSSOM.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have noticed this year an extraordinary profusion of blossom on elm trees both in this neighbourhood and at Richmond (Surrey), and I am told by some of the villagers that this has never been known before in the memory of the "oldest inhabitant," and that elms only blossom "once in a hundred years." I should be very glad of any information on the subject. I would also be glad to know if there is any superstition with regard to martins building under the porch of a front door. A pair have come for the first time this

year, and have so persistently disregarded any hints to set up their establishment a little further from the entrance to the house that they are now allowed to do as they like, and we are watching them with much interest.—M. DAWK.

HOW TO COOK SPINACH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The question of the cooking of spinach seems to be interesting the English public at the present moment, and I venture to think that a few recipes as prepared in French households may prove welcome to some of your readers. First of all, I would like to dispel the belief, so prevalent in England, that butter, as used in the cooking of vegetables in France, renders them indigestible, or, as the current expression has it, "bilious." This is a mistake on the face of it, as biliousness—almost unknown in France—is a national illness in England, caused not only by the heavy consumption of meat, but by the insufficient time given to the preparing of many vegetables, notably cabbages, which form part of the daily food in the United Kingdom. Butter is indispensable to the flavouring of vegetables, and is not in any way injurious to the health. To return to spinach. As a general rule it is estimated that for a dish of spinach—where it is not meant as an apology but a dish that is nutritious and intended to be partaken of freely—1lb. is required per person. No matter what the dressing of the spinach may be, the starting-point is always the same. It must be well washed, changing the water several times, then thrown into a saucepan of boiling water with a handful of cooking-salt to boil for two or three minutes without covering the saucepan. The spinach is thereupon strained and placed under the tap of running cold water while it is in the cullender, squeezed between the hands and either chopped very fine or passed through a wire sieve. For 5lb. or 6lb. of spinach about $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of butter is placed in a stewpan, and when steaming hot the spinach is added, and turned rapidly with a wooden spoon to dry it without giving it time to lose its colour. Salt and pepper are sprinkled in moderation, with a pinch of sugar, and the vegetable is served as hot as possible surrounded with cubes of bread fried in butter. *Spinach à la crème*.—Prepare as in the preceding recipe with a teacupful of double cream added to the spinach before it is taken from the stewpan to be served. *Spinach au jus*.—The same as before, with a teacupful of good gravy instead of butter. *Subrics of Spinach*.—After having blanched, refreshed, pressed and chopped 2lb. of spinach, throw it into hot butter. Salt and pepper, and add a tablespoonful of flour. Let this purée cook for 6min. or 7min., then take it off and add three eggs and three yolks beaten together. Mix them with the spinach and, spoonful by spoonful, drop them into a stewpan containing sufficient quantity of steaming butter to fry them. Turn the subrics from one side to the other and let them cook for another 3min. or 4min.; strain and serve them in a turban on a round dish with a good, creamy béchamel sauce in the centre.—FRANCES KEYZER.

NIGHTJARS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Of the birds of this Buckinghamshire common, the most interesting are those which appear at dusk. A park wall runs just behind the high road and the houses bordering the common; and, hardly more than 100yds. over the wall, a swampy patch in the park is the nesting-place of a pair of snipe. On most evenings the male bird flies "drumming" over the houses and drops by the pond across the road, whence at intervals a loud "chack-chack" announces that he is feeding busily. (My window faces the pond, and one morning at 2.45 I was awakened by the noisy bird.) Sometimes a barn-owl will slip through the trees from the park and flit, ghost-like, over the gorse. A grasshopper-warbler starts his queer song, a partridge calls, plovers wheel and cry, and nightjars, which are fairly numerous hereabouts, fly out over the common before dark. A few days ago I happened to be standing close by when a nightjar pitched itself over the tall trees, flew across the road and began to quarter the gorse bushes and the pond. As the light failed it became more and more difficult, and at last impossible, to follow the bird's swerving flight, except when its reflection in the water showed that it was rapidly skimming the surface of the pond. Suddenly, like some gigantic swallow, the nightjar dipped with a loud splash, rose again and was lost in the dusk. Next instant there was a sharp cry—"Hoik, hoik"—and, just overhead, the nightjar came into full view, darting

upwards in pursuit of some hapless moth. From below, the conspicuous white spots on wings and tail—the adornment, I believe, of the male bird only—could be plainly seen. I have been much struck by the great contrast between the nightjar's wavering, moth-like flight, when flushed in dry bracken or heather by day and its strong bold flight at evening. No swift is more efficient than a hawking nightjar in the gloom. Indeed,



PILGRIMS RETURNING FROM MECCA.

when with fine, rapid, cutting wing-strokes it flings itself aside, as it were, or heels over with lightning speed on a new tack, a nightjar in full chase reminds me strongly of a swift. One evening, recently, in the woods a mile away, I heard the opening of a nightjar concert. From all sides the "churring" sound began simultaneously, as if at a given signal. Then came the loud clapping of wings and two birds darted upwards together, calling that loud, sharp, "Hoik, hoik." Re-lighting, the "churring" was resumed—this time only a short distance away. I quietly approached and saw, a few yards off, a nightjar seated lengthwise on a dead bough, singing his strange song. He turned round and round, "churring" all the time, then darted into the air, uttered his loud cry and once more settled on the branch. Now another alighted on the same bough, behind the first bird, and sat also lengthwise, flitting its tail up and down. Perhaps the two birds resented my intrusion on their love-making for they flew off, and now all I could see through the deepening gloom was an occasional dim form flitting about among the trees. The loud cries and clapping of wings continued until nine o'clock, when all became still and the nightjars, I imagine, dispersed for their evening's foraging expedition. This "churring" sound (produced apparently only when the bird is seated) is not absolutely monotonous. It starts on one note, drops two or three full tones, rises again to the original note, drops again, and so on. In this regular rise and fall it closely resembles the "reeling" song of the grasshopper-warbler. Of course, the nightjar's note is much deeper, but in quality of sound, as well as in the similarity of their musical intervals (if such a term may be used to describe something which is in no way musical), the two "songs" are much alike. That same evening a grasshopper-warbler was "reeling" close to the common, and the resemblance struck me forcibly. The grasshopper-warbler's song, on a still evening, can be heard at an astonishing distance. On this occasion the sound penetrated through my open window—fully a quarter of a mile from the tree where the bird was singing—and continued with few interruptions until after midnight. The exact spot from which the sound proceeds, too, is very difficult to discover. The following night as I walked across the common every gorse bush seemed to contain a singing grasshopper-warbler, there being, in fact, but one singer—the bird I had heard the previous night.—J. RUDGE HARDING, Gerrard's Cross, Bucks.

P.S.—Two nightjars' nests which I have been watching here have been robbed by marauding jays.—J. R. H.

PILGRIMS RETURNING FROM MECCA.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The enclosed photographs were taken in March in the harbour of Tor from the pilgrim steamer *Fazoum*, as the pilgrims were embarking on their return passage to Suez after their long and arduous journey through the desert from Mecca and Medina. The pilgrims leave Suez in great numbers in the autumn on these pilgrim boats, which accommodate from 600 to 1,000, and the passage to Tor takes from fourteen to sixteen hours. Caravans are made up at Tor for Mecca and Medina. There is a large quarantine camp at Tor capable of accommodating some 6,000 pilgrims, where they are strictly quarantined for three weeks on their return journey. As the time of their detention expires they are sent off in batches to the steamers awaiting them. Before leaving the camp they are, with all their goods and chattels, thoroughly fumigated and disinfected, much to their disgust. Unfortunately, we were not allowed to visit the quarantine camp, as there were several cases of plague. We went on board the *Fazoum* in the morning and found both her decks were cleared of everything to accommodate the 1,000 pilgrims expected about noon. The harbour is a bad one, as it is quite open to a southerly gale; and although these do not often occur, quite a severe one was blowing the day we arrived, and boarding the doctor's launch, which

took us ashore, was a matter of nice judgment in the heavy sea. The country is all sand, rising gently to a magnificent range of red granite mountains, and these appear very beautiful at sunrise and sunset. The ancient town of Tor is composed of a few stone houses and mud huts; altogether a most depressing place. About 12.30 p.m. I was writing in the saloon when a fearful din arose on deck, shouts, yells and the trampling of many feet—the pilgrims were coming on board. I went up to the after deck, reserved for those pilgrims who could afford the so-called first class accommodation, and saw four large barges discharging a hot and shouting mass of humanity, composed of Syrians, Turks, Russians, Arabs, Nubians, Levantines, etc. Chaos reigned supreme, the noise was truly awful and the aroma indescribable. Steam launches towing more barges were coming off and waiting until they could come alongside. Eventually things began to assume a more orderly condition; the pilgrims found their belongings, their wives and relations. They found places where they could on deck, and some began to pray and others to prepare a meal of sorts. We left Tor about 5 p.m. and arrived at Suez at 7 a.m. the next morning. The new railway will change all this; the pilgrims will save money, and incidentally distribute plague and other horrible diseases broadcast throughout Europe, *via* Syria, Turkey and Russia, as all quarantine will be done away with.—WILLIAM CRANSTON.

CARE OF STARLING IN CAPTIVITY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have lately saved a young starling from my cat, and am anxious to keep it, as I am told they make very amusing pets and get very tame. I am feeding it on odd scraps of meat, boiled rice, bread, potatoes, etc., as I notice when feeding the birds on our lawn in the winter that the starlings seem to eat anything that is going. I shall be grateful if you can advise me as to any particular form of diet and also what sort of cage is the best.—ALICE GORDON.

WATER RAT CARRYING YOUNG ONE

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It happened to me the other day, while fishing, to see a thing that I have never seen before—though I have passed many days at this season of the year by the water-side—a water-rat, or vole, carrying its young one. I was especially drawn to notice this particular vole by the fact that as it swam it appeared to me to have an abnormally large head. A closer look gave me a chance to see that what gave it this appearance was that it was carrying some dark object in its mouth, and a rather closer look still let me see that this object was a young one of its own kind. Of course, I do not know its object in thus carrying its baby about; I could only speculate that it was conveying it from one nursery to another which seemed safer or more salubrious. I had not the opportunity for watching it long, because it disappeared into a hole in the bank, and I could not wait, because the May-fly were rising, and so were the fish. It may be quite a common thing for the water-vole to carry its young about in this way, but I have never seen it before. I have asked several river-keepers, and they, too, say they have not seen such a thing.—H. G. H.

A CAT AND TWO BLACKBIRDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Two blackbirds have again returned to their nest near my summer quarters, much to my surprise after an experience they had last springtime with



MECCA PILGRIMS.

a strange cat. Their fledgeling, evidently escaped from the neighbouring nest, had with some difficulty fluttered from a fence into the overhanging branches of a lime tree. A cat had also observed the young flier, and immediately gave chase, rushing up the stem of the tree with the intention of getting on to the branch to obtain her prey; but meanwhile the parent birds had come upon the scene and, seeing the situation of their nestling, attacked the cat with

the utmost bravery, trying to prevent her crawling on to the branch. They kept alternately flying at her, using their beaks and wings incessantly with uncommon fury, and coming fearlessly within range of pussy's claws; and while one was pouncing at her head the other would execute a flank attack, both of them keeping up all the time that continuous noisy, angry clatter which blackbirds so well know how to make on occasion. These bold strategic movements confused the cat, as her position on the tree was far from advantageous; but she kept striking out with her claws whenever an opportunity occurred. I made an effort to help the birds, but the low, thick branches of the tree intervening, missiles were not of much use. For two hours the birds kept up the attack without ceasing, forcing the enemy to keep on the defensive only. At last the birds were completely exhausted and sat "all of a heap," looking as if they had lost half their feathers, like the jackdaw of Rheims after the curse. But they had kept the would-be murderer from their fledgeling, and I at last managed, with the aid of a ladder and a long pole, to dislodge the quadruped. In the afternoon the happy pair seemed quite to have recovered themselves and were singing a song of victory in the garden in celebration of what, perhaps, was one of the longest and pluckiest fights of the kind that had ever been known.—S.

SOME DELUSIONS REGARDING OYSTERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It is a common belief, very consoling to those of feeble digestions, that the oyster, when taken into the stomach, executes, by virtue of hepatic diastase, a kind of *felo de se* and digests itself. I recently tried the experiment, and put oysters, whole and masticated, into water, plain, alkaline and acidulated, and found the result *nil*, except in the case of the acidulated water, when prolonged digestion caused a softening of the liver of the bivalve. Fallacy number two, that raw oysters are always more digestible than when cooked, is not borne out by artificial digestion with pepsine. The oyster stew, being composite in character, is, however, not quite as readily managed, by the stomach as raw oysters or those roasted in the shell. Delusion number three, that fermented liquors digest or assist the digestion of the bivalve, was not borne out by the trial; nor was the oft-cited experiment that an oyster dropped into a glass of beer will dissolve found to be correct. As a general conclusion, I must reluctantly condemn the oyster as a mockery; but no doubt the bivalve will still be indulged in by mortals who can afford the luxury.—G.

A STRAY SWARM.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I enclose a photograph of combs built by some bees in a hedge close to my garden and apiary. All my three hives of bees swarmed early in June, 1907, and only one, to my knowledge, sent out a cast, so probably these bees which settled in the hedge were from one of the remaining two hives. They were discovered by some haymakers on July 15th; but it was impossible to shake them into a skep owing to their impregnable position inside the hedge and to the combs being so large. They lived through the rain and cold until October 15th, when, finding them much dwindled in numbers and all dead, I cut them from the hedge on the bough, as shown in the photograph. I send the picture, thinking perhaps it may be sufficiently interesting and good for reproduction in your valuable paper.—EDWARD G. CROAGEN.



DEVONSHIRE CIDER.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—I shall be much obliged if you, or any of your readers, can let me know a place where I can obtain best quality pure Devonshire cider. I do not require the names

of the large manufacturers, as these are already known to me; but it has occurred to me that possibly there may be some small country makers who are well placed for turning out cider of specially fine quality, and I shall be glad if I can be furnished with the names of such makers.—BALTIC.

SIGN-POSTS.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—Adverting to your recent remarks on direction-posts, etc., for travellers by road, I beg to enclose a photograph of a somewhat unusual type of post to be seen on the outskirts of Tideswell in Derbyshire. This post is remarkable on account of the extraordinary

number of places indicated thereon, and shows clearly the advantage of having the letters perforated, the names showing up distinctly against the sky. Direction-posts of this character are readable long after it is too dark to decipher the orthodox painted boards, and many of these latter, from lack of paint, are illegible. I am of opinion that these perforated direction-posts would prove the most economical in the long run and users of the roads would appreciate them.—HENRY WALKER.



A FOAL'S FOSTER-MOTHER.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I enclose you a photograph of an occurrence I have never seen before, namely, a foal sucking its foster-mother, a cow. It is the property of a personal friend of mine, Mr. A. J. Ramm of Wells, Norfolk. The mare died, and the thought struck him to foster the foal on a cow, and, funnily enough, she took to it. The most marvellous thing is that the foal only sucks two teats—always the same two, the owner having to have the other two milked night and morning. This is interesting, as a mare's udder has only two teats.—W. E. WARNES.



SPARROWS

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—As some people object to the destruction of sparrows, and claim that these ubiquitous birds have their uses, the experiences of the owner of a small garden may be of interest. To begin with, the writer has found it impossible to grow yellow crocuses without an elaborate network of fine black cotton stretched over them to keep the destructive little birds from tearing the flowers to pieces. It has been stated that sparrows do this while hunting for insects which are accustomed to lurk in yellow crocuses only; it is, however, much more probable that it is the taste of the saffron itself which is the attraction. This is borne out by the fact that sparrows will cut the flowers of early primroses to pieces, and that they do not then attack all primrose plants indiscriminately, but pick out certain ones, the flowers of which for some reason please their taste; white or coloured primroses, for instance, are never touched. In a bed of common wild primroses it was very noticeable how certain plants were marked out for destruction, and not a single flower allowed to appear without being instantly pulled to pieces. The usual method was to nip off the petals all round, leaving just the centre of the flower. Sparrows do not confine their depredations to primroses and crocuses; other flowers also suffer. The heads of geraniums in a window-box are occasionally nipped off, just below the bunch of buds. This is apparently done out of pure mischief, as the buds are not eaten, but allowed to lie just where they fall. Blackbirds, thrushes and starlings do nothing but good in the flower garden; but as their diet consists largely of worms, the gardener cannot rely on much assistance from even the insectivorous birds in ridding the ground of his chief enemies, slugs and snails. Slugs are so largely nocturnal in their habits that they escape the birds to a great extent. Sparrows one never sees quartering the lawn for insects; whenever noticed they will be found in trees picking at the buds, or hunting about for refuse food from the house. A few days since an unfortunate pair of martins which had built under the eaves were turned out by sparrows, which, having dispossessed the rightful owners, filled the nest with hair, wool and dry grass to suit their own ideas of house-furnishing. After careful examination of the case for and against his own sparrows, the writer has decided to condemn; and no extenuating circumstances having come to light, some 360 shot cartridges are going to be loaded with a small charge of Schultze and No. 10 as the instrument for just execution.—FLOR-DE-LYS.

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